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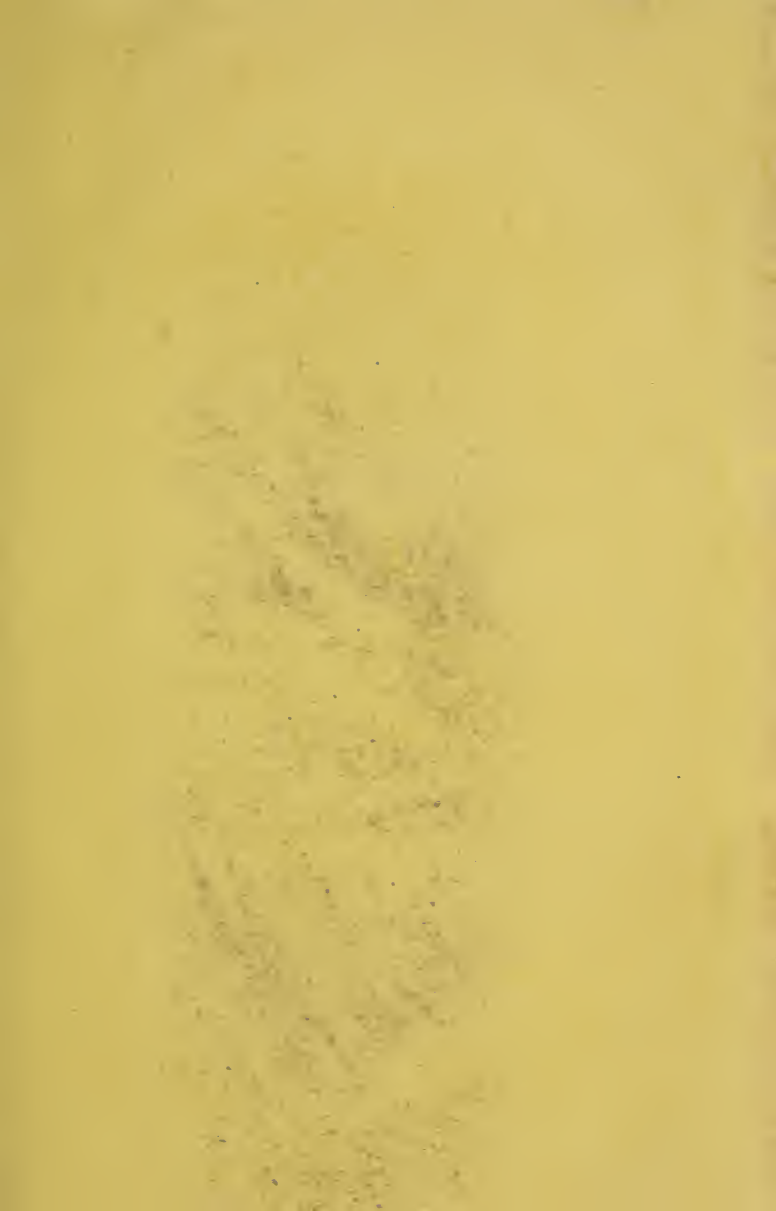
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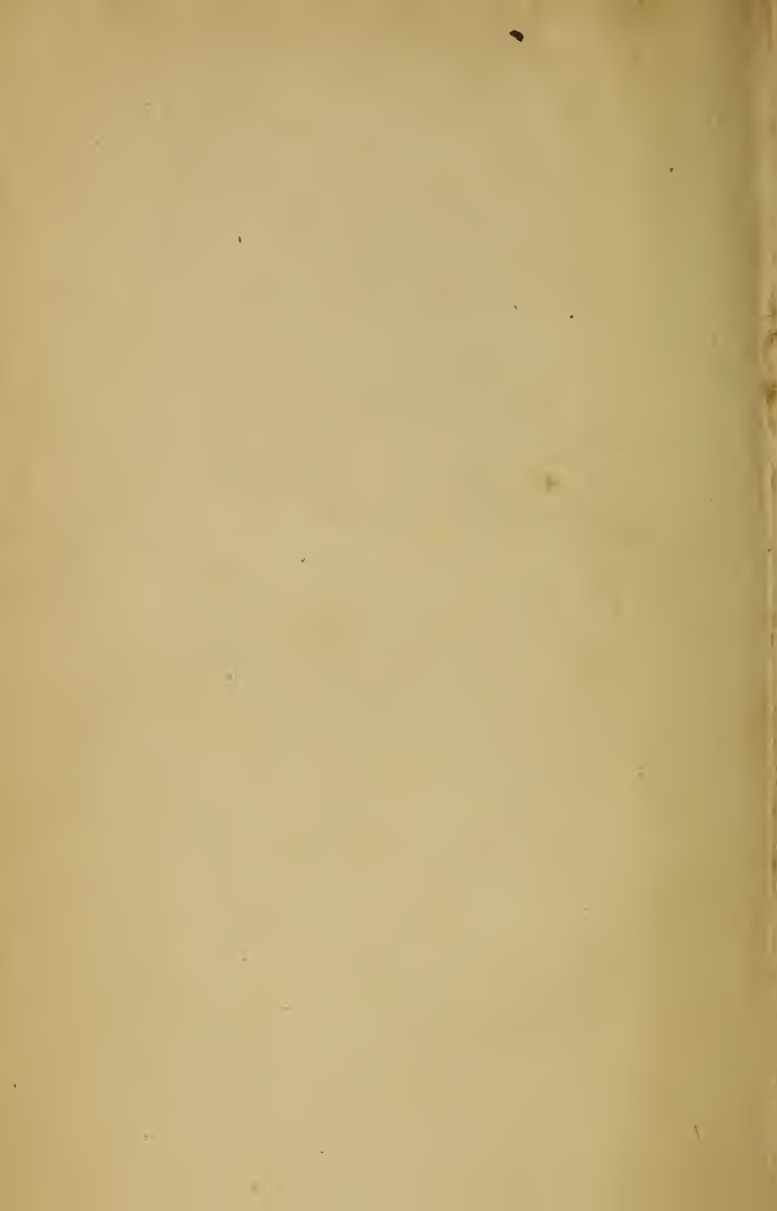
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Hamilton



IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE

WITH

ORIGINAL POEMS.

Was ich gewollt ist löblich, wenn das Ziel

Auch meinen Kräften unerreichbar blieb.—*Tasso, iv. 4.*

Or convien, ch'Elicona per me versi

Et Urania m'aiuti col suo coro

Forti cose a pensar, mettere in versi.—*Dante.*

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

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PREFACE.

THE drama of "Iphigenia in Tauris" is generally considered as Goethe's masterpiece. It is styled, by his illustrious countryman, Schlegel, an echo of Greek song; and although that echo must necessarily lose in clearness by passing into another language, the translator hopes that, faint as the sounds may be, they will yet be strong enough to convey to the English reader some idea of the beauty of the German drama. As a proof of the high estimation in which "Iphigenia in Tauris" is held by the Germans, it may be mentioned that it was performed at the Theatre of Weimar on Goethe's eightieth birthday, as the highest tribute that could be offered to the poet's genius.

Sidmouth, October 17th, 1850.

CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA.

IPHIGENIA, Priestess of Diana.

THOAS, King of Tauris.

ORESTES, Brother of Iphigenia.

PYLADES, Friend of Orestes.

ARKAS, a Taurian Soldier.

Scene—Grove before the Temple of Diana.

INTRODUCTION.

ON the return of the Grecian princes, after the destruction of Troy, their fleet was detained at Aulis by contrary winds, as a sign of Diana's displeasure against Agamemnon, the leader of the host, and a descendant of Tantalus, who had offended the goddess by killing her favourite stag. The oracle having declared that the only way to propitiate Diana was to sacrifice to her, Iphigenia, Agamemnon's eldest daughter, she was brought to the camp, but just as Calchas, the priest, was about to slay her at the altar, the appeased goddess appeared, and carried her away to Tauris, a region where strangers were offered in sacrifice before Diana's shrine.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

ACT I.

SCENE THE FIRST.

IPHIGENIA.

Beneath your sacred shades, ye ancient groves,
With shuddering awe I walk, as when I trod
Your silent precincts first, and ne'er my soul
Familiar with your solemn scenes has grown :
For, though, full many years, that higher will,
To which I bow, has kept me here concealed,
To you I feel myself a stranger still ;
For, ah ! the sea divides me from the loved,
And on the coast I stand the live-long day,
My sad soul seeking for the Grecian land,
But to my sighs the waves bring no reply
Save hollow murmurs rolling from afar.
Alas ! for him, who far from home and kin,
A lonely life must lead. For grief, the bliss
Which nearest to him lies, does snatch away ;
Whilst thickly swarming thoughts for ever rise
Towards his father's halls, where first the sun
Before his eyes revealed the glorious sky :

Where, playing with his child-mates, each to each,
 In tender bands were ever faster knit.
 I will not judge the gods, but yet I know
 That woman's destiny for pity calls ;
 At home, and in the strife, man rules supreme,
 And e'en in foreign lands himself can aid ;
 Possession makes him glad, him victory crowns,
 And for him is prepared a glorious death.
 How narrowly bound up is woman's lot !
 For e'en a savage husband to obey
 Her duty is and comfort ; wretched she,
 When driven by a hostile fate afar,
 As I am now, whom noble Thoas keeps
 In stern and sacred slavish fetters fast.
 Oh ! how it shames me, goddess, to avow,
 That 'tis with dumb aversion thee I serve,
 Thee, my deliverer, when my life should be
 In willing service given up to thee.
 In thee I ever hoped, and I will trust,
 Diana ! still in thee—in thee, who me,
 The exiled daughter of a mighty king,
 Within thy tender sacred arms received.
 Oh, Zeus's daughter ! if the valiant man
 Whom thou, his daughter claiming, didst afflict ;
 If thou, the godlike Agamemnon, who
 His best and dearest to thy altars brought ;
 If thou hast him from Troy's uprooted walls
 Back to his native land in triumph led ;

If thou, his spouse, Electra, and his son,
 Those dear delights, hast guarded for him well ;
 Then give me also back to him at last,
 And save me, thou, who rescued me from death,
 Save me from life passed here, this second death.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Iphigenia—Arkas.

ARKAS.

The king has sent me here, and wills that I
 Should, with his greeting, Diana's priestess hail ;
 Tauris, upon this day, her goddess thanks,
 For glorious, fresh, and wondrous vict'ries gained.
 I hasten from the host, and from the king,
 T' announce his coming, and his near approach.

IPHIGENIA.

To meet him worthily, we are prepared :
 The welcome offerings brought by Thoas' hand,
 With fav'ring eye, our goddess will regard.

ARKAS.

Oh, priestess, would I also saw thine eye,
 Most holy maid, more bright and more serene,—
 A sign of good to all ; but sorrow still
 Enshrouds mysteriously thy inmost soul.

Through many years we 've waited, yet in vain,
 To hear from thee one kind, confiding word.
 So long as in this office thee I 've known,
 Thy gaze has made me shudder, e'en as now ;
 And, as with iron bands, remains thy soul,
 Within thy inmost bosom fettered fast.

IPHIGENIA.

As suits the banished and the orphaned one.

ARKAS.

Banished and orphaned here, dost feel thyself?

IPHIGENIA.

Can foreign lands ever become our own?

ARKAS.

To thee thy native land is strange as this.

IPHIGENIA.

And that is why my heart for ever bleeds.—
 In my first youth, when yet my soul scarce knew
 Parents and brethren to itself to bind ;
 When the young shoot, so loving and so loved,
 From the old root, strove heavenwards to press,
 'Twas then, alas ! that I was fiercely seized
 By that dread curse which strangely severed me
 From my beloved, tearing each sweetest tie,

With ruthless unrelenting hand, in twain ;
 Then fled from me the dearest joys of youth,
 The bliss of childhood's years. Though saved, I am
 Only the shadow of my former self,
 For me fresh joys of life no more can bloom.

ARKAS.

If so unhappy thou dost deem thyself,
 Ungrateful, then, must thou indeed be called.

IPHIGENIA.

Thanks have I still for thee.

ARKAS.

Yet not pure thanks
 For whose dear sake are deeds of kindness done,
 Such as the look with which a heart at peace,
 And grateful breast, reward the gracious host.
 When thou, a deeply hid, mysterious fate
 Brought to Diana's fane long years ago,
 To greet thee as a treasure sent by Zeus,
 With reverence and with awe did Thoas come ;
 To thee these shores, which every stranger's heart
 Had long appalled, were gracious and were kind ;
 For none ere thee was cast upon this coast
 Who did not bleeding fall in sacrifice
 At Dian's shrine, as willed the ancient law.

IPHIGENIA.

It is not breath alone which makes up life!
 Call you *that* life which in the sacred fane
 I sorrowfully lead, like some poor ghost
 That wanders round its grave? Can I call *that*
 A joyful and sufficient life in which
 Each cheerless day is wearily dreamed through,
 As only leading to those sadder days
 The self oblivious hosts of the deceased
 Are doomed to linger through on Lethe's shores?
 A useless life is but an earlier death,
 This, woman's fate, is now indeed my own.

ARKAS.

I can forgive, though I must needs deplore
 Thy noble pride, which will not rest content;
 But still it robs thee of the joys of life.
 Say! since thy coming, hast thou nothing done?
 Who was it cheered the monarch's troubled mind?
 Who was it that, with soft, persuasive words,
 Moved him to waive the fearful law which willed
 That every stranger in Diana's fane,
 Year after year, should bleeding leave his life?
 Who was it sent to his dear fatherland
 So oft the prisoners doomed to certain death?
 Hath not Diana, far from giving sign
 Of anger that her bloody offerings failed,

In richest measure granted all thy prayers ?
 And doth not victory hover o'er our hosts
 With joyful wings, nay, hasten on before ?
 Doth not each feel his lot is better far
 E'er since the monarch, who, with wisdom, long
 And gloriously hath ruled us, in thy sight
 Rejoicing now, has mild become to us,
 Lightening obedience we in silence pay ?
 Call'st thou life useless, when a precious balm
 Down from thy being, still on thousands drops ;
 And when a fresh eternal source of bliss,
 Thou art to those to whom thou 'rt sent by Zeus ;
 When from the dire, unfriendly, shores of death
 Still for the stranger thou provid'st escape ?

IPHIGENIA.

The little done, soon fades from sight to him
 Who, forward looking, sees how much remains.

ARKAS.

Dost praise him, then, who underrates himself ?

IPHIGENIA.

Who weighs his own deserts is justly blamed.

ARKAS.

He too, who, in his pride, true worth disdains,
 As well as he who false worth elevates.

Believe in me, and hearken to a man
 In truth devoted honestly to thee :
 Thus, when the king with thee this day shall speak,
 Lighten to him what he designs to say.

IPHIGENIA.

Each kindly word sends trouble to my soul ;
 His proffers often can I scarce evade.

ARKAS.

Think what thou dost, and what will serve thy cause.
 E'er since the time the monarch lost his son,
 There are but few in whom he will confide,
 And in those few, no more as he was wont.
 Jealous he looks on every noble's son,
 As of his realm successor, whilst he fears
 A lonely helpless age,—aye, e'en, perchance,
 A rash rebellion, an untimely death.
 The Scythian sets but little worth on words,
 And least of all the king. Who is but used
 To action and command, knows not the art
 To guide discourse from far with subtle tact
 Until it reach the goal he has in view.
 By wearisome denials stay him not ;
 But try his meaning graciously to meet,
 Nor wilfully mistake his kindly words.

IPHIGENIA.

Must I accelerate my threatened fate ?

ARKAS.

Dost give his gracious suit the name of threat?

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis the most terrible of threats to me.

ARKAS.

Let confidence at least reward his love.

IPHIGENIA.

Then must he first unloose my soul from fear.

ARKAS.

Wherefore from him conceal'st thou thy descent?

IPHIGENIA.

Such mystery a priestess well beseems.

ARKAS.

Nought should be kept a secret from the king;
 Though he demand it not, yet still he feels,
 Yes, feels it deeply in his noble soul,
 That thou should'st hide it with such care from him.

IPHIGENIA.

Does he, 'gainst me, begin to nourish ire?

ARKAS.

So it would seem almost, although of thee
He nothing says, yet words cast here and there
Have shown me that the wish, thee to possess,
Fast on his soul has seized. Oh! leave him not,
I do beseech thee, to himself a prey,
That anger may not ripen in his soul,
And work thee wo, when with repentance thou,
Too late, my honest counsel shalt recall.

IPHIGENIA.

What! does the king design a thing which none
Who loves the honour of a noble name, which none,
Whom veneration of the gods restrains,
Should even dream of? Does he think by force
To drag me from the altar to his bed?
Oh, then I will to all the gods appeal,
And to the chaste Diana first of all,
She will assuredly her priestess hear,
Herself a virgin, will a virgin guard.

ARKAS.

Be not afraid. 'Tis not the heat of blood
Impels the monarch rashly to perform
Such youthful deeds. But in his present mind
I fear from him another hard resolve,
Which he, inexorably, will perform,

His soul is so immovable and firm.
 I pray thee, therefore, thank him, give him trust,
 If nothing further thou to him canst grant.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh! tell me what is further known to thee.

ARKAS.

Learn that from him. I see the monarch come.
 Thou honourest him; and thee thy heart will prompt
 Him kindly and confidingly to meet.
 A noble man by woman's gentle words
 May far be led.

IPHIGENIA, (*alone.*)

In truth, I do not see
 How I this good man's counsel can obey.
 My duty I will gladly do towards the king,
 For his kind actions proffer friendly words;
 And much I wish that unto him my lips
 With truth could utter what would please his ear.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Iphigenia—Thoas.

IPHIGENIA.

Thee may the goddess bless with kingly gifts,
 And fame and glory unto thee assure,

And riches and the welfare of thy kin,
 In fulness granting all thy pious prayers ;
 That thou, in wisdom ruling o'er thy land,
 May'st bliss enjoy even beyond its own.

THOAS.

Content were I, if me my people praised ;
 My conquests gladden them far more than me.
 He is, indeed, the happiest, be he king,
 Or be he one of lowly birth, for whom
 Within his home is happiness assured.
 Thou wast a sharer in my deepest grief,
 When by the foeman's sword my son was slain,
 My last and best who from my side was torn.
 Long as revenge my every thought possessed,
 I did not feel how empty was my home.
 But now that satiated I return,
 My foes defeated, and my son avenged,
 Nought near my hearth I find to glad my sight.
 The pleased obedience paid to me of old,
 Which once shone brightly forth from every eye,
 Is clouded now with discontent and care ;
 The whilst my people on the future think,
 Only, because they must, obeying me,
 Their hapless monarch, left without an heir.
 Now to this temple have I come to-day,
 Where I so oft for victory have prayed,
 Or thanks for conquest given. An old,

Long-cherished wish within my breast I bear,
 Not strange or unexpected 'tis to thee ;
 I fondly hope, thee, as a bride, to lead
 Back to my home, to bless my land and me.

IPHIGENIA.

To one unknown thou proferest far too much,
 O, noble king. Before thee stands ashamed
 The fugitive who sought upon this coast
 Nought but the rest and safety thou didst give.

THOAS.

That thou within the mystery of thy birth
 From me, as from us all, thyself hast kept
 So studiously concealed, would ne'er have been,
 'Mongst any nation, reckoned just and right.
 This coast the stranger terrifies ; its laws,
 Its dangers, make it fearful. But from thee,
 Who every pious right enjoy'st, by us
 A welcomed guest, according to thy will,
 And thy own pleasure, passing all thy days ;
 From thee I looked for trust, such as the host
 Might, for his kindness to his guest, expect.

IPHIGENIA.

That I concealed my parents' name and house
 Arose but from perplexity, O king,
 Not from mistrust. For if, methinks, thou knew'st

Who stands before thee, and whose cursed head
 Thou cherishest and guardest, thy great soul
 By shuddering terror would at once be seized ;
 And thou, instead of offering me a seat
 Beside thy throne, would'st drive me swift away
 From out thy kingdom ; thrust me hence, perchance,
 Into that misery, whose cold, fearful hand
 Grasps every wanderer from his native land,
 Before the time ordained, when to my kin,
 My exile o'er, I shall return at last.

THOAS.

Whate'er may be the counsel of the gods,
 Or their designs towards thee and thy house,
 There fails me not, since thou with us has dwelt,
 The rights enjoying of a blameless guest,
 One single bounteous blessing from above.
 It would indeed be hard, to make me think
 That I, in thee, a criminal protect.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy own good deeds bring blessings, not thy guest.

THOAS.

He who does wickedly is never blest :
 So now thy silence and refusals end,
 The man who asks thee this is not unjust.
 The goddess gave thee over to my care,

Sacred to me thou wert, as e'en to her.
 Henceforth her wish shall be to me as law,
 And if return thou to thy home canst hope,
 Thou shalt at once from every claim be freed ;
 But, if the way for ever be blocked up,
 And if thy race be exiled, or extinct
 For ever, through some dread or monstrous curse,
 Then every law proclaims that thou art mine ;—
 Speak freely, for thou know'st I keep my word.

IPHIGENIA.

Unwillingly the tongue doth free itself
 From ancient bands, a secret to disclose,
 In silence long time hid ; for, soon as 'tis
 Entrusted to another, it doth leave,
 Without return, the heart's recesses, harm
 Or good to work, as it may please the gods.
 Hear ! of the race of Tantalus I come.

THOAS.

Calmly thou lettest fall a word of dread.
 Is he thine ancestor, he whom the world
 Knows as the sometime fav'rite of the gods ?
 Say ! can it be indeed *that* Tantalus,
 Whom Zeus had to his board and counsels called ?
 In whose rich-freighted converse, thoughts profound
 And mind experienced, e'en the gods themselves,
 As to an oracle, well pleased, did list ?

IPHIGENIA.

The very same ; but gods should not with men,
 Hand clasped in hand, as with their equals walk.
 Our mortal race is all too weak to tread
 Such unaccustomed heights with steady feet.
 No traitor was he, neither was he base,
 But for a slave too great ; and for the friend
 Of him who wields the thunder, but a man.
 His fault was heinous, but his doom severe,
 And poets sing, that from the board of Zeus
 Disloyalty and pride did hurl him down
 To fellest depths of ancient Tartarus.
 Alas ! his race god-hated are since then.

THOAS.

Bore it his guilt, or did it bear its own ?

IPHIGENIA.

Albeit the mighty Titan's sturdy breast
 And sinewy strength, as certain heritage,
 He to his son and grandson left, yet Zeus
 Around their forehead clasped a brazen band,
 Patience and wisdom, forethought, temperance,
 Concealing from their dread and gloomy view.
 Then all their passions into fury merged,
 And boundlessly their fury raged around.
 Already, Pelops, of the mighty will,

Beloved son of Tantalus, obtained,
 Through treachery and murder, for his wife
 That lovely maiden, Hippodamia named.
 She to her husband gave two children, called
 Thyestes and Atreus. These two beheld,
 With envious eyes, the love their father bore
 Towards the son born of another bed.
 Bound by their hate, the pair in secret risked
 Their first dread act, the crime of fratricide.
 Their sire, believing that their mother was
 Herself the murderess, claimed with savage rage
 His son from her ; then did she slay herself.

THOAS.

Why dost thou pause ? Let not thy soul repent
 Its trust and confidence in me. Say on.

IPHIGENIA.

How blest is he who on his father's deeds
 Can think with joy, and gladly entertain
 His hearer with their greatness, whilst himself
 In silence he congratulates, that he
 Should of so noble chain be closing link !
 Not all at once are born great demigods
 And fearful monsters in the self-same house ;
 Long lines of good or evil fame precede,
 The terror or delight of all the world,
 Brought forth at last. Their father, Pelops, dead,

The brothers then the city jointly ruled,
Long could they not in unity remain.
Thyestes first his brother's honour wounds,
Him Atreus from the realm, revenging drives,
But, long ere this, Thyestes, filled with spite,
On crime intent, had stol'n his brother's son,
And nurtured him as though he were his own.
With fury and revenge he filled his breast ;
Then to the royal city sent him forth,
That he, his sire, might in his uncle slay.
The youth's design was frustrated. The king
Punished most fearfully the criminal,
Deeming that he had killed his brother's son.
Too late he found who, 'neath his drunken gaze,
In torture died, and then within his breast,
To slake the thirst of vengeance, he conceived
Unheard of deeds. Appeased he seemed,
Indifferent, and even reconciled :
Then lured his brother, with his children twain,
Back to the realm, next seized and slew the boys.
This done, he placed the loathsome, fearful meal
Before the father, at his first repast.
But whilst Thyestes thus, on his own flesh,
His hunger stayed, deep sadness seized his soul :
He for the children called, their step, their voice
Already, close approaching to the door,
Believed to hear ; then Atreus tow'rd's him threw,
With horrible grimace, their heads and feet.

Shuddering thou dost avert thy face, O king :
 So turned the sun his glorious face away,
 And swerved his chariot from th' eternal track.
 These of thy priestess are the ancestors,
 And many fearful tales like this, and deeds
 Which spring from maddened brains, the night conceals
 Beneath her heavy wings, permitting us
 Nought but their gloomy twilight to perceive.

THOAS.

Hide them in silence, too ? Enough, enough,
 Of horror 'tis. But say, through what strange fate
 Thou from a race so wild didst issue forth ?

IPHIGENIA.

Of Atreus, Agamemnon was first-born,
 And he my father is ; and I, in him,
 Have ever since my very earliest years
 A godlike pattern of perfection seen.
 Me unto him did Clytemnestra bear,
 First-fruit of love ; then was Electra born.
 In peace the king did rule, and to the house
 Of Tantalus, the rest, so long withheld,
 Appeared assured. But to my parents' bliss
 Still failed a son. Scarce was this wish fulfilled,
 And 'tween his sisters, young Orestes grew
 The darling of us all, than were prepared
 New evils for a house that seemed secure.

The rumour of that war has reached thy ear,
 When to avenge a husband's direst wrongs,
 The robbery of the loveliest wife in Greece,
 The assembled princes with their armies lay
 Encamped in siege beneath the walls of Troy.
 I have not heard if they the city took,
 And their revenge did satisfy. The host
 My father led. In Aulis waited they
 A favouring wind in vain, for Dian stayed
 Those who were hastening on; so much was she
 Enraged against the king, the whilst she claimed
 From him his eldest child by Calchas' mouth.
 They lured me with my mother to the camp;
 Then dragged me to the altar, where they doomed
 My head to great Diana. But appeased,
 She asked not for my blood, and, in a cloud
 Concealing, saved me. In this temple 'twas
 That first I knew I had escaped from death.
 Grandchild of Atreus, she it is who speaks,
 Iphigenia, Agamemnon's child,
 And to Diana do I now belong.

THOAS.

Not greater honour or regard I give
 To thee as princess, than to thee unknown.
 My first request again I now renew;
 Hence! follow me, and share with me my realm.

IPHIGENIA.

How dare I risk a step like this, O king?
 Hath not the goddess, she who rescued me,
 The right unto my consecrated life?
 She hath for me a place of safety sought;
 Me for my father, whom she has enough
 Chastised by my apparent death, she keeps
 Secluded here, to gladden his old age
 In days to come. Perchance my blest return
 Is near at hand, and shall I, 'gainst her will
 And 'gainst her wish, myself in fetters place?
 A sign I ask, if I must here remain.

THOAS.

The sign is this. Thou still abidest here.
 Seek not so anxiously for vain excuse;
 'Tis useless in refusing much to say;
 The listener hears of all nought but the *no*.

IPHIGENIA.

Mine are not words intended to deceive.
 I have my deepest heart to thee revealed.
 Ah! see'st thou not thyself, how I must long
 Each day, each hour, with yearning anguished soul,
 To meet once more my parents and my kin?
 That in those ancient halls, where grief my name
 Oft lisps 'midst silence, joy again may hang,

From every pillar, wreaths of loveliest flowers,
 As in glad welcome of a new-born child ?
 Oh ! would'st thou let thy vessels bear me hence
 To me and mine new life thou wouldest give !

THOAS.

So be it ! Go ! Do what thy heart desires,
 And hearken not to reason's kindly voice,
 Or sage advice. Nought but a woman be,
 And to the brideless impulse dragging thee
 Where'er it lists, thyself give wholly up.
 When burns a wish within a woman's breast
 No bands avail, or when the traitor tries
 To lure her from the fond and faithful arms
 Of husband or of father to his own ;
 If glowing fire burn but within her breast,
 Of no avail with her is power or truth,
 Or soft persuasions of a golden tongue.

IPHIGENIA.

Bethink thee of thy noble word, O king.
 Ah ! wilt thou thus my trust requite ? Thou seem'st
 Prepared to hear all that I had to say.

THOAS.

For things unlooked for was I not prepared.
 Yet these I might have looked for. Knew I not
 That with a woman 'twas I had to deal ?

IPHIGENIA.

Depict not thus, O king, our feeble sex ;
 Not lordly, like the weapons used by thee,
 Yet not ignoble, those a woman bears.
 Believe me, that I know, ah ! better far
 Than thou thyself, what will assure thy bliss.
 Thou deemed'st, while yet I was to thee unknown,
 A closer band would us in bliss unite.
 Filled with a kind intent, thy trustful heart
 Still urges me to join myself with thee :
 But here I thank the gods that they to me
 Have given resolve this union not to form ;
 A union that I know would them displease.

THOAS.

Thy heart it is and not the gods who speak.

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis only through our hearts to us they speak.

THOAS.

Have I not, too, the right their voice to hear ?

IPHIGENIA.

The raging storm their gentle voice o'ercomes.

THOAS.

The priestess is it who alone can hear ?

IPHIGENIA.

The prince, before all else, should list their voice.

THOAS.

Thy holy office, thy ancestral right
To sit at Zeus's board, thee nearer brings
Than me, an earth-born savage, to the gods.

IPHIGENIA.

So must I rue the trust thou didst extort.

THOAS.

I am but man. 'Tis better that we end ;
So shall I keep my word. Be priestess still
To her, the goddess, who has chosen thee.
Yet may Diana pardon me, that I,
Till now unjustly, but with self-reproach,
The ancient sacrifice should have withheld.
No stranger ever safely neared our coasts
Who was not, from of old, to death condemned.
But me, with friendship sweet, thou didst beguile,
In which at times a daughter's tenderness,
At times the dawning of a dearer love,
My heart rejoiced, till as with magic chains
I was enthralled, and duty I forgot.
Thou hadst so lulled to sleep my every sense
The murmurs of my people were unheard ;
Now at my door with voices loud they lay

The guilt of my dear son's too early death ;
 But for thy sake no longer I oppose
 Those who with cries the sacrifice demand.

IPHIGENIA.

To be withheld for me, I ne'er desired.
 But he the gods doth misconceive who deems
 That they bloodthirsty are ; he but imputes
 To them his own most cruel, base desires.
 Did not Diana me from Calchas snatch,
 And my poor service to my death preferred ?

THOAS.

It is not seemly that we should attempt,
 With shifting arguments, the sacred rites
 To construe and to guide as seems us fit.
 Do thou thy duty. I will follow mine.
 Two strangers, who, concealed within a cave,
 Upon the coast were found, and to my land
 Bring nothing good, are captive in my hands ;
 With these thy goddess shall receive once more,
 Her first and just, but long-abstained-from rites.
 I send them here. Thy office thou dost know.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

IPHIGENIA, (*alone.*)

Great deliverer ! in a cloud
 Thou these guiltless ones enshroud.

From the iron arms of fate,
Snatch them, ere it be too late ;
Bear them from a cruel death,
O'er the widest bounds of earth,
On the winds across the sea,
Where it seemeth good to thee.
Wise, the future thou dost see ;
Past is not the past to thee ;
All is present to thy sight ;
As thy light, the life of night,
O'er the earth doth rule and rest,
So thy own are still the blest.
Oh ! from blood my hand restrain,
Ne'er bestows it rest or gain :
Evil hours, the murdered shade,
Brings his slayer, makes afraid,
Him, who, forced against his will,
Blood that's innocent must spill.
Mortals, the celestials love,
Look with pity from above,
On our widely-spreading race,
Pleased their fleeting lives a space
To delay, that of the skies
They to mortals' longing eyes,
Glad may grant a while the sight,
Entering into their delight.

ACT II.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Orestes—Pylades

ORESTES.

Along the gloomy path of death we tread ;
 With every step my soul grows more serene.
 When I Apollo prayed to take away
 The Furies' fearful escort from my side,
 He seemed to promise safety and escape
 Within the fane upon the Taurian coast,
 Where his beloved sister rules, with words
 Which hope inspired, as spoken by a god ;
 And now it seems about to be fulfilled,
 That with my life my troubles all shall end.
 How easy would it be for me whose heart
 Beneath the heavy hand of Zeus is crushed,
 Whose senses all are deadened, to renounce
 The dazzling light of the resplendent sun.
 What ! shall the sons of Atreus never win
 A glorious end, with wreaths of conquest crowned ?
 And must I, like my fathers and my sire,
 In death ignoble, as a victim bleed ?
 So be it. Better on the altar here,
 Than in a spot accursed, where cunning nets
 By murderers, near of kin allied, are laid.

Leave me to brief repose, infernal ones,
 Who, hunting me like hounds let loose, my steps
 Track by the blood that ever dropping falls
 Where'er I step, and marks out all my path.
 Leave me ! to you I downwards soon must come,
 The light of day nor you nor I shall see ;
 The verdant carpet of the lovely earth
 No gathering place for shades may be, I come
 Below to seek you out, and all whom fate
 Has bound alike in ever dreary night.
 But thou, my Pylades, who of my crime
 And of my exile guiltless partner art,
 Before thy time, down to this land of grief
 Unwillingly I take. Thy life or death
 Alone excites in me or hope or fear.

PYLADES.

Like thee, Orestes, am I not prepared
 As yet to seek the kingdom of the shades.
 I purpose still, through these entangled paths,
 That seem to lead to shades of blackest night,
 To win our upward way to life again.
 On death I think not, but I watch and wait,
 In hope, perchance, the gods, for happy flight,
 A means and fitting way may still prepare :
 Or, feared or not, still death at last will come,
 And when the priestess lifts her hand to cut
 Our dedicated locks, my only thought

E'en then will be, thy safety and my own.
 Exalt thy soul above despair, for thus
 The danger thou but hastenest. To us
 Apollo pledged his word, that we should find
 Both aid and comfort in his sister's fane.
 Words spoke by gods are not of double sense,
 As the oppressed may deem in his despair.

ORESTES.

Upon my tender head my mother spread,
 In childhood's years, the gloomy veil of life ;
 I grew to be the image of my sire,
 And this mute semblance 'twas which sorely stung,
 With sharp reproach, her and her lover too.
 How often when Electra quiet sat
 Beside the fire, within our ancient halls,
 Nestling all anxiously upon her lap
 I watched, as bitterly she wept, and looked
 On her with wondering eyes. And then she spoke
 Much of our valiant father, ah ! so much
 That him I longed to see, with him to be,
 Myself sometimes I wished at Troy, sometimes
 Him here. Then came the day,—

PYLADES.

Oh ! of that hour
 Let fiends of hell hold converse night by night.
 Be ours the mem'ry of a happier time,

Which to the hero's soul new strength may bring.
 The gods full many righteous men require,
 On this wide earth, their bidding to fulfil;
 And still they need thee, for they did not give
 Thee as companion to thy noble sire,
 When he to Orcus so unwilling went.

ORESTES.

Would I had seized the border of his robe
 And followed him.

PYLADES.

'Twas that for me they cared
 Who held thee back. If thou had'st ceased to live,
 What had become of me I dare not think,
 For I with thee, and for thy sake alone,
 Since childhood's years have lived, or cared to live.

ORESTES.

Remind me not of those sweet, happy days
 Which gave to me a place within thy home.
 Thy noble father, wisely, and with care,
 The young, half-perished blossom tending well;
 Whilst thou, a loving playmate, ever gay,
 Like some bright, many-coloured butterfly,
 That flutters round a dark and gloomy flower,
 Didst round me sport, with fresher life each day,
 And breathe thy mirthful spirit into mine,

Until, my cares forgetting, I with thee
 Revelled in all the joys of thoughtless youth.

PYLADES.

For me did life begin when thee I loved.

ORESTES.

Truth thou wouldst speak, if thou didst say, thy grief,
 For 'tis the bitterest portion of my lot
 That as an outcast, stricken by the plague,
 A hidden death I bear within my breast ;
 That when I tread the healthiest spots, e'en there,
 Too soon, I see each blooming face around
 Betray the sorrow lines of lingering death.

PYLADES.

I should have been the first this death to die,
 Orestes, if thy breath could poison thus,
 But am I not, as ever, full of life ?
 And life, and love, and courage are the wings
 Of noble deeds.

ORESTES.

Of noble deeds ! Ah ! yes,
 I mind me when in vision them we saw ;
 As we some savage beast together oft,
 O'er hill and vale pursued, and hoped the while
 That when we should some future day attain

The strength of breast and arm our sires possessed,
 So we like them some monster dread might chase,
 Or hunting, track the robber for our prey.
 And then at evening, near the boundless sea,
 We, 'gainst each other leaning, quiet sat,
 The little wavelets playing at our feet,
 Whilst all around us lay the broad, wide world,
 Then one of us would sudden seize his sword,
 And future deeds swarmed round us like the stars,
 Which countless shone from out the depths of night.

PYLADES.

The work in truth is endless that the soul
 Impels us to fulfil. We would each deed
 Which we perform, were all at once as great
 As it becomes and grows, when through long years,
 Through lands and races, in the poet's mouth
 It gathers fame, whilst rolling on in verse.
 All that our fathers did so glorious seems,
 When resting in the tranquil evening shades,
 We drink it in to music of the harp ;
 And what we do seems as it did to them,
 Of trouble full, and nought but fragments vain.
 All that before us lies we thus pursue,
 And never heed the path on which we tread,
 Or near us see our valiant fathers' steps,
 The traces of their bygone earthly lives.
 But onwards hast'ning, still we chase their shades,

Which godlike in the misty distance loom
 Like mountain summits crowned with golden clouds.
 Him little I esteem who weighs himself
 After the measure of the people's praise.
 But thou, Orestes, to the gods give thanks,
 Who have already done so much through thee.

ORESTES.

When they to glorious deeds ordain a man,
 As evil from his house to turn away,
 Extend his realm, its bounds assure, and make
 Its ancient enemies to fall or flee ;
 Then may he grateful be ; on him the gods
 The first and highest bliss of life bestow.
 But me, as murderer, they have set apart,
 To slay a mother whom I still revere,
 A shameful deed revenging shamefully,
 By their decree to ruin me they bring.
 Trust me, the race of Tantalus is doomed,
 And I, the last, may not in innocence
 Or honour pass.

PYLADES.

Not on the sons,
 The father's misdeeds, do the gods avenge.
 Each, be he good or be he evil, reaps
 The due reward for which his actions call,
 Heir to his father's blessing, not his curse.

ORESTES.

Methinks their blessing did not lead us here.

PYLADES.

Yet 'twas at least their own supreme decree.

ORESTES.

So is it then their will which us destroys.

PYLADES.

Do what they bid thee and await the rest :
If to Apollo, thou his sister bring,
That both united may at Delphi dwell,
Revered and worshipped by a noble race,
Thee for this deed the noble, heavenly pair,
With gracious eye will view, and from the hand
Of these dread Furies save. Already here
Within this sacred grove they dare not come.

ORESTES.

So shall I have at least a quiet death.

PYLADES.

Not so, I think, for I have pondered o'er,
In silence, past events, combining them,
By skilful, subtle tact, with things to come.
Perchance, through many years, this glorious work

Has ripened in the counsel of the gods.
 Diana longs to flee this barbarous coast,
 Where savage men the bloody sacrifice
 Of human victims offer in her fane ;
 We have been destined to this noble deed,
 To us it is assigned, and strangely thus
 Before her fane we are constrained to come.

ORESTES.

With wondrous skill, thou knowest how to weave
 Thy wishes with the counsel of the gods.

PYLADES.

What is man's prudence if he fail to watch,
 With heedful gaze, the will of those above ?
 The gods to deeds of danger heroes call,
 Who much have sinned ; and things from them require
 Which to fulfil impossible appears.
 The hero conquers, and repenting serves
 The gods and men, who give him honour due.

ORESTES.

Am I, indeed, ordained to live and act ?
 Then let the gods take from my heavy brow
 This maddening impulse, driving me along
 A path made slippery by my mother's blood,—
 The path of death. O, let them pitying dry

The fountain which from Clytemnestra's wounds
For ever spouting, thus defiles her son.

PYLADES.

More tranquil wait. Thou dost increase thy ills,
On thee the Furies office taking thus.
Let me but plan. Be still. And when at last
The work shall call for our united strength,
Then will I summon thee, and we will forth,
With cautious daring, to achieve the deed.

ORESTES.

I hear Ulysses speak !

PYLADES.

Nay ! mock me not,
For each his hero for himself must choose,
Whom he as worthy pattern takes to show
How he Olympus' lofty mount may climb.
Methinks that craft and prudence ne'er disgrace
The man who vows himself to daring deeds.

ORESTES.

Who is uprightly bold I most esteem.

PYLADES.

Therefore have I thy counsel never asked.
Already is the work begun. I have

Already from our guards extracted much.
 A godlike woman, foreign to these shores,
 Enchained in fetters holds the bloody law ;
 Incense and prayer, with guileless heart, she brings
 Before the gods. Her praises far and wide
 They celebrate, the whilst they think she springs
 Of Amazonian race, and hither fled
 That she some fearful evils may escape.

ORESTES.

It seems her gentle sway lost all its power,
 Soon as the wretch drew near, who, by a curse,
 E'en as by night, is shrouded and pursued.
 A pious thirst for blood, the ancient law
 Has from its chains unloosed, our doom to seal.
 The monarch's savage will our death decrees ;
 A woman cannot save us from his rage.

PYLADES.

'Tis well for us that she a woman is :
 Trust me, a man, aye, e'en the best, in time
 With fearful deeds may so accustomed grow,
 That out of that which he at first abhorred
 He makes himself at last a law, becomes
 Hard-hearted and unlike his former self ;
 But woman steadfast ever doth remain
 To what she first resolves, and thou on her
 With far more certainty, alike in good

Or evil, may depend. But hush ! she comes.
 Leave us alone. I may not all at once
 To her confide, without reserve, our names
 And destinies. I pray thee now retire,
 And ere with thee she speaks, we 'll meet again.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Iphigenia—Pylades.

IPHIGENIA.

From whence thou art and com'st, oh, stranger, say,
 It seemeth me, that rather to a Greek,
 Than to a Scythian, thee I should compare.

(She takes off his chains.)

Most dangerous is the freedom which I give ;
 Oh, may the gods avert thy threatened doom !

PYLADES.

Oh ! sweetest voice ! Oh ! welcome thousand-fold,
 Sounds of my mother tongue in foreign land !
 The azure mountains of my native shores
 Before mine eyes in them once more I see,
 And welcome with a captive's joy. Let this
 Be proof to thee, I also am a Greek.
 I had forgotten for a moment's space
 How much thine aid I need, the whilst my soul
 Was filled and dazzled by thy presence fair.
 Oh, say, if mystery on thy lips her seal

Should not have laid, from out what kindred race
Dost thou thy godlike origin derive ?

IPHIGENIA.

The priestess by the goddess' self ordained
And set apart as sacred, speaks with thee,—
Let that suffice. Now, tell me who thou art,
And what unblest o'erruling fate has thee,
With thy companion, driven to these shores ?

PYLADES.

To thee, 'twill easy be for me to tell
What curse torments us with its presence dread.
Oh ! couldst thou with like ease on us of hope
The cheering glance, oh, godlike one, bestow.
From Crete are we, and of Adrastus' sons.
I am the youngest born, and Cephalus named,
He is Laodamus, the eldest son.
Between us twain there grew another son,
Of wild and savage soul, who oft disturbed
The joy and concord of our childhood's days.
Passive we listened to our mother's words
Long as our valiant father fought for Troy,
But when, enriched with booty, he returned
And shortly after died, then contest fierce
Rose midst the brethren for the heritage,
And for the realm. The eldest 'twas I joined ;
He slew our brother ; for the bloody crime

The Furies chase relentlessly his steps.
 Yet to this savage coast, the Delphian god
 Has sent us cheered by hope, and bids us wait
 Within his sister's consecrated fane,
 The blessed hand of comfort and of aid.
 Captives we are. To thee are hither brought
 For sacrifice. And now thou knowest all.

IPHIGENIA.

Is Troy o'erthrown? Good friend, assure me this?

PYLADES.

It lies in dust. Assure us safety now.
 Oh, hasten thou, Apollo's promised aid;
 Have pity, priestess, on my brother too.
 Say to him soon, some gentle, kindly word.
 Yet spare him when thou dost with him discourse;
 This I implore. Too easily, alas!
 His breast, through memories of joy or grief,
 Is torn and shattered to its inmost depths,
 Till with delirious fever he is seized,
 And then his free and lovely soul becomes
 As 'twere to Furies yielded for a prey.

IPHIGENIA

Though great thy mis'ry be, entreat I thee
 Forget it now, and tell me what I wish.

PYLADES.

The noble city, which for ten long years
 Did all th' united hosts of Greece withstand,
 Now lies in dust ; shall never rise again.
 Yet many a hero's grave will to our souls
 Bring back the mem'ry of that barbarous coast ;
 There lies Achilles with his valiant friend.

IPHIGENIA.

Thus, then, oh ! godlike men, ye lie in dust !

PYLADES.

Ajax and Palamedes ne'er again
 Will see the light of day in fatherland.

IPHIGENIA.

He speaks not of my sire. Him doth not name
 Among the slain. Yes, still he lives for me,
 Him shall I see again. Hope on, fond heart !

PYLADES.

Yet blessed are the thousands, they who died
 A sweetly bitter death 'neath foeman's hand ;
 For desolating woes, and tragic end,
 Instead of triumph, a revengeful god
 Prepared for those who to their homes returned.
 Do human voices never reach your ears ?

Where'er they sound do they afar and near
 Bear tales of deeds unparalleled in fame.
 Are then the woes which have Mycenæ's halls,
 With tears and ever ceaseless sighings, filled
 To you a secret? Clytemnestra hath,
 With base Ægisthus' aid, her spouse ensnared
 And murdered, on the day of his return.
 Ah! yes, thou dost revere this kingly house,
 I see it well; thy breast doth fight in vain
 Against the unexpected monstrous news;
 Art thou the daughter of a friend? Art thou
 Within a state near to Mycenæ born?
 Conceal it not: revenge it not on me,
 That I have been the first this crime to tell.

IPHIGENIA.

Say on; how was the fearful deed performed?

PYLADES.

When on the day of his return the king
 Arose from out the bath, refreshed and soothed,
 His robe demanding from his consort's hands,
 The wicked traitress, o'er his noble head
 And round his shoulders, threw a garment made
 With many an artful, complicated fold,
 And whilst, as from a net, in vain he strove
 Himself to extricate, Ægisthus slew

The valiant prince, whom thus, the traitor base,
Sent, shrouded in his robe, to seek the shades.

IPHIGENIA.

And what reward received the treacherous man?

PYLADES.

The realm and queen, which were already his.

IPHIGENIA.

Base passion prompted, then, that wicked deed?

PYLADES.

And feelings cherished long of deep revenge.

IPHIGENIA.

How had the king 'gainst Clytemnestra sinned?

PYLADES.

By such a fearful crime, that, if excuse
For murder could be found, she were excused.
To Aulis he allured her, when the fleet
Was by a goddess stayed, with adverse winds.
Her eldest daughter then he brought before
The great Diana's altar, where she fell
A bloody sacrifice for Grecian weal.
And this, 'tis said, abhorrence in her heart
So deep impressed, that to Ægisthus' suit

Herself she yielded, and around her spouse
She flung the net of treachery and death.

IPHIGENIA, (*concealing her face.*)

It is enough, soon shall we meet again.

PYLADES, (*alone.*)

I see the story of this kingly house
Has deeply moved her. Whosoe'er she be,
She must herself have known the monarch well.
'Tis fortunate for us she hath been sold,
And hither brought, from out a noble house.
Be still, dear heart, and towards the star of hope,
Which o'er us beams, with courage let us steer.

ACT III.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Iphigenia—Orestes.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy man, thy fetters I but loose,
In token of a doom more bitter still.
The freedom which the sacred fane assures,
Is as the last bright gleam of life, that shines
Upon a dying face and heralds death.
Yet to myself I cannot, dare not say,
That ye are lost indeed. For how could I,
With murderous hand, devote you unto death ?
And long as I Diana's priestess am,
None, be he who he may, dare touch thy head.
Yet, if I were the monarch to oppose,
Dared I refuse the duty to perform
He in his rage requires, he would but then
Choose out another virgin from my train
Me in my priestly office to succeed,
Whilst I could only aid you with my prayers.
Oh, my compatriot, e'en the meanest slave,
Who hath but grazed our lares-guarded hearth,
Is gladly welcomed in a foreign land ;
How shall I then enough with blessings hail,
With joy receive thee, who, before my eyes,

Dost bring the image of those godlike men
 My parents early taught me to revere?
 How shall I greet thee, who my inmost heart
 Dost cheer anew with sweet and flattering hopes?

ORESTES.

Does prudent forethought lead thee to conceal
 Thy origin and name? Or, may I know
 Who, like a heavenly vision, meets my gaze?

IPHIGENIA.

Me shalt thou know. But first conclude the tale
 Of which but half I from thy brother heard;
 And tell me of their end, who, when from Troy
 They home returned, a hard unlooked-for fate
 Upon the threshold of their dwelling found.
 Though I was but a girl when hither brought,
 I mind me of the shy and wondering gaze
 I on those heroes cast. Methought it seemed
 As if Olympus' mount had cast them forth,
 Illustrious forms of an anterior age,
 That they might Illion with terror fill;
 And Agamemnon noblest was of all.
 Say, was it on the threshold that he fell,
 Slain by the false Ægisthus and his wife?

ORESTES.

E'en so.

IPHIGENIA.

Accursed Mycenæ ! wo to thee.

'Tis thus the sons of Tantalus have sown,
 With wild and lavish hand, curse heaped on curse.
 As some foul, noxious weed, that shakes its head,
 And strews around its many thousand seeds,
 So do they give to none but murd'ers birth,
 Who feast their rage, each on the other, down
 To children's children. Now reveal to me
 What of thy brother's tale remains untold,
 Which in its silent darkness, horror hid.
 How did the remnant of that noble race,
 Avenger of his father doomed to be,
 How did the gentle child Orestes 'scape
 Upon that bloody day ? Or did like fate
 Enshroud him with Avernus' treach'rous net ;
 Say, is he saved ? Electra, does she live ?

ORESTES.

They live.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, lend to me, thou golden sun,
 Thy brightest beams, beneath the throne of Zeus
 To lay in thanks, for I am poor and dumb.

ORESTES.

If thou by social ties, or nearer bonds,

Shouldst be connected with this royal house,
 As seems thy guileless joy to indicate ;
 Then must thou hold with tightest reins thy heart,
 For back to fall from joy's supremest heights
 To sorrow's depths unbearable must be.
 Thou know'st as yet but Agamemnon's death.

IPHIGENIA.

And are these tidings not enough for me ?

ORESTES.

But half hast thou of all these horrors heard.

IPHIGENIA.

Orestes and Electra both survive,
 What can there, then, remain for me to dread ?

ORESTES.

For Clytemnestra dost thou nothing fear ?

IPHIGENIA.

Nor hope nor fear her can avail to save.

ORESTES.

She to the land of hope has bade farewell.

IPHIGENIA.

And did she, then, her hand repentant raise
 And slay herself ?

ORESTES.

Not so, and yet it was
By her own blood she fell a prey to death.

IPHIGENIA.

Speak clearer and bewilder me no more ;
For with her dark and many-folded wings,
Suspense doth hover o'er my anxious head.

ORESTES.

Have I been then elected by the gods
T' announce a deed I would so gladly hide
Within the silent, hellish realms of night ?
Me, 'gainst my will, thy gracious lips constrain,
Demanding and obtaining that from me
Will give Thee pain to hear and me to tell.
The day on which his father fell, Electra hid
And saved her brother. Agamemnon's friend
And kinsman, Strophius, willingly received,
And reared the boy, with Pylades his son,
Who twined around him friendship's lovely bands ;
And as they grew, so grew within their souls
A burning wish t' avenge the monarch's death.
Unseen of all, disguised in strange attire,
They reach Mycenæ, feigning to have brought
The mournful tidings of Orestes' death
There, with his ashes. Welcomed by the queen,

The halls Orestes enters of his home,
 Then to Electra he reveals himself.
 She fans the flame of vengeance in his breast,
 Which in his mother's sacred presence seemed
 As though it had been stifled. Him she leads
 In silence to the place where fell his sire,
 Where traces faint of blood, so madly shed,
 Still stain the oft, but vainly, cleansed floor
 With pale and soul-intimidating streaks ;
 Each circumstance of that most cursed crime
 Describes to him, with fiery glowing words,
 Her slavish, suffering, and heart-trampled life,
 The haughty pride the prosp'rous traitor shows,
 The perils threat'ning Agamemnon's race,
 From Clytemnestra, as Ægisthus' wife.
 Then in his hand the ancient dagger thrusts,
 Which oft before had raged within his house,—
 Slain by her son, did Clytemnestra fall.

IPHIGENIA.

Immortal powers ! who, through each day serene,
 Most blessed live midst ever-varying shades
 And changing lights of richly-tinted clouds,
 Have you, for this alone, me through long years
 From men secluded kept, and near yourselves :
 To me the childlike office given to feed
 The holy flame, and like it taught my soul,
 In sacred purity for ever clear,

To your eternal dwellings to aspire,
 Only that I the terrors of my house
 Might but the later and the deeper feel ?
 Speak of Orestes, of the wretched speak.

ORESTES.

Would I could give thee tidings of his death !
 Bubbling arises from her reeking blood,
 The slain one's ghost !
 And to night's aged daughters thus it calls :
 " Let not the murderer of his mother 'scape ;
 Pursue the traitor yielded up to you."
 They listen, and with hollow eyes they glare,
 Like greedy eagles, on their wretched prey ;
 Then stir themselves within their dusky caves,
 Whilst from their corners, their companions dread,
 Remorse and fierce despair, creep softly forth.
 Before them fumes the smoke of Acheron,
 And mirrored in its gloomy circling clouds,
 Which whirl around the wretched victim's head,
 Is ever seen the image of the past ;
 And they, who by an ancient curse from earth
 Had exiled been, to whom belongs the right
 To ruin and destroy, tread once again
 Its lovely hills and plains, whereon the gods
 Have scattered beauty with a lavish hand,
 Their swifter feet the fugitive pursue,
 Or rest but give him to affright anew.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy man ! thy case is like his own,
All that he suffers thou dost suffer too.

ORESTES.

What sayest thou, what mean'st thou, by like case ?

IPHIGENIA.

Like him, 'tis fratricide that weighs thy soul
Down to the dust. Thy brother hath to me
Already told the tale of wo and crime.

ORESTES.

I cannot suffer that thy noble soul
Should be by words of falsehood thus deceived.
The stranger 'tis, who, practised in deceit
And rich in cunning, weaves a lying web
To snare a stranger's feet ; but 'tween us twain
Let there be truth.

I am Orestes, and this guilty head
Bows o'er the grave and earnest longs for death.
Welcome 'twill be, come in what form it may.
Whoe'er thou art, to thee and to my friend
I wish escape, but I desire it not.
Against thy will thou seem'st to tarry here.
Seek out for means of flight, here will I stay,
And from the rocks my body shall be hurled,

And in the sea my streaming blood shall fall,
 To call down curses on this savage shore ;
 Return together, in our lovely Greece
 With joy a new existence to begin.

(He withdraws.)

IPHIGENIA.

Thus, then, Fulfilment, fairest child of Zeus,
 Dost thou from heaven descend to me at last ?
 How vast ! how wonderful ! thine image looms ;
 My straining gaze can scarcely reach thy hands,
 Which, filled with festive garlands and with fruits,
 Bring down the treasures of Olympus' height.
 As by the lavish measure of his gifts
 The king we recognize, (for what may seem
 To thousands riches, nothing is to him,)
 So we the gods may know by sparing boons
 In wisdom long and fittingly prepared.
 For ye alone can tell our real wants,
 And o'er the future's wide-spread realm, which mist
 And cloud and starry veil from us conceal,
 Your eyes for ever rove. Ye to our prayers
 In calmness list, when we like children sue
 For greater speed ; but never will your hands
 For us break off unripe heaven's golden fruit ;
 And wo to him who doth impatient seize,
 Defying you, the food which, snatched too soon,
 Instead of bliss, gives death. Let not, I pray,

This long-awaited happiness, which yet
 I scarce can realise, glide by in vain,
 Like to the shadows of departed friends,
 And leave me thrice more wretched than before.

ORESTES, (*returning.*)

When thou, for Pylades and for thyself,
 Dost to the gods appeal, name not my name.
 Thou canst not save the traitor thou would'st join,
 Whose sorrows and whose curse thou wouldest share.

IPHIGENIA.

My destiny is fast bound up with thine.

ORESTES.

No! thus it must not be. Let me to death
 Alone and unattended go. For e'en should'st thou
 Beneath thy veil conceal my guilty head,
 Thou couldst not hide me from the Furies' eyes.
 Thy presence, heavenly maid, doth only drive
 My foes aside, 'tis powerless them to scare.
 With brazen, impious feet they dare not tread
 Within the precincts of these sacred groves,
 But in the distance, ever and anon,
 I hear their fearful laughter. 'Tis e'en thus
 That round the tree, on which a traveller
 Has refuge sought, wolves prowling wait. Without
 They lie encamped and rest; but should I quit

This consecrated grove, then would they rise
 And shake their serpent locks, and brush the ground,
 Till darkening all the air with clouds of dust,
 Their wretched prey before them they would drive.

IPHIGENIA.

Wilt thou, Orestes, list a friendly word ?

ORESTES.

Keep it for him who of the gods is friend.

IPHIGENIA.

They give to thee anew the light of hope.

ORESTES.

Through smoke and steam I see the glimmer faint,
 Of Orcus' flood, which lights me down to hell.

IPHIGENIA.

Hast thou no sister, save Electra, left ?

ORESTES.

I know but one alone, for her good fate,
 A fate that seemed to us so full of dread,
 My eldest sister early bore away
 From out the misery reigning o'er our house.
 Ah ! cease thy questions, nor thyself unite
 With the Erinnys who, with fiendish joy,

Delight to blow the ashes from my soul,
 Lest e'en the faintest spark which lingers still,
 Amidst the fearful heap should be allowed
 To die away in peace. Oh ! must the fire
 With purpose kindled, with hell's sulphur fed,
 My anguished, tortured soul for ever sear ?

IPHIGENIA.

I bring sweet incense to assuage the flame.
 Oh ! let the pure and gentle breath of love,
 The burning heat within thy bosom cool.
 Orestes, loved one, dost thou nothing feel ?
 Has, then, the fearful Furies' escort dread
 Dried up the circling blood within thy veins ?
 And doth there creep through all thy limbs a spell
 Like that which o'er the Gorgon's head is cast,
 And turns whoever looks on it to stone ?
 Ah ! though the voices from thy mother's blood,
 With hollow tones, are calling thee to hell,
 Shall not a guiltless sister's blessing call
 Down from Olympus some aid-bringing god ?

ORESTES.

She calls ! she calls ! Would'st thou my ruin too ?
 Doth a revenging fury in thee hide ?
 Who art thou, say, whose gentle voice my soul
 So fearful stirs within its inmost depths ?

IPHIGENIA.

Thy inmost heart reveals it. Look at me !
 Thy sister, I, Iphigenia, am,
 I live.

ORESTES.

Thou !

IPHIGENIA.

My brother !

ORESTES.

Hence away !

Touch not these locks, I counsel thee, begone !
 For as from Creusa's bridal robe, from me
 There ever flames a fire that nought can quench.
 Leave me, for I, like Hercules, will die
 The death of shame, wrapt in my guilty self.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou wilt not perish ? Oh ! that I might hear
 One single tranquil word fall from thy lips.
 Oh, free me from my doubts, and let the bliss
 Long-wished, long-prayed for, be assured at last.
 A wheel of sorrow and of joy revolves
 Through all my soul. I with aversion turn

From men unknown, but brother, unto thee,
With force resistless, is my soul impelled.

ORESTES.

Is this the fane of Bacchus ? Doth the glow
Of holy transport thee, its priestess, seize ?

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, hear me ! Oh, look up ! See how my heart,
So long time closed, doth welcome give once more,
To bliss the highest which the world bestows.
Oh, let me kiss that head, and thee embrace
With these poor arms, that to the empty winds
Alone have been extended. Stay me not !
Repulse me not, beloved ! Th' eternal spring
Gushed never clearer from Parnassus forth,
Or leapt with quicker haste from rock to rock,
Until it reached the golden vale beneath,
Than from my heart the flood of gladness pours,
And like a sea of bliss around me swells.
Orestes ! Oh, my brother !

ORESTES.

Lovely nymph !

I neither trust thy flatteries nor thyself.
The great Diana vassals strict requires,
And doth avenge a desecrated fane.
Remove thy twining arms from round my breast.

If thou a youth canst love, and him wilt save,
 And then earth's sweetest bliss on him bestow,
 Give to my friend thy heart, for he, indeed,
 Is worthier far than I. Go, seek him out,
 Amidst these rocks he wanders even now.
 Lead him to safety. Peace! Leave me.

IPHIGENIA.

Collect

Thyself, my brother, recognise the lost.
 Chide not a sister's pure and holy love,
 As though it were a passion base and low.
 Ye gods! remove th' illusion from his eyes,
 Lest these sweet moments, full of highest bliss,
 Render us threefold wretched. She is here,
 Thy long-lost sister; me the goddess snatched,
 And from the altar bearing, placed me here,
 Within the precincts of her sacred grove.
 A captive thou, prepared for sacrifice,
 Dost now thy sister in the priestess find.

ORESTES.

Unhappy one! now may the sun behold
 The last dread horrors of our fated house.
 Is not Electra here, that she with us
 May perish now, and her sad life not be
 For sharper, deeper sorrows still prolonged?

'Tis well. Come, priestess, to the altar lead,
 For fratricide has ever of our house
 The custom been, and you I thank, ye gods,
 Who, childless, have resolved to root me out.
 And now by me be counselled. Hold not thou
 The dazzling sun and myriad stars too dear,
 But follow me to night's dark realms below.
 As dragons gendered in the sulph'rous lake,
 Which first wage war, then feast upon their brood,
 So our accursed race destroys itself.
 Childless and guiltless, come with me below ;
 On me thou dost with pity gaze. Ah ! cease.
 'Twas with such looks that Clytemnestra sought
 An entrance to her son Orestes' heart,
 And yet his upraised arm transfixed her heart,
 His mother fell. Appear ! indignant ghost !
 Within the circle, come, ye Furies, come,
 And at the welcome spectacle assist,
 The last most fearful one that ye prepare.
 Nor hate nor vengeance gives the dagger edge ;
 A loving sister 'tis that to the deed
 Is now compelled. Come, weep not, guiltless one !
 Ah ! since my very childhood have I ne'er
 Loved aught, my sister, as I thee could love.
 Yes ! brandish now thy steel, and spare me not.
 This bosom rive, and let the streams which boil
 Within my breast burst forth, and find at last escape.

(He sinks exhausted.)

IPHIGENIA.

This weight of blessedness, this load of wo,
 I cannot bear alone. Oh dear, my friend,
 Thy help I need. Where art thou, Pylades ?

(Iphigenia retires, seeking him.)

SCENE THE SECOND.

ORESTES,

(recovering from his swoon, and standing up.)

Yet reach to me once more from Lethes' stream,
 The last cold cup, whose draughts revival give ;
 For soon will life's convulsive throes be stilled
 Within my breast ; my spirit soon will glide,
 In gentle stillness, to Oblivion's source,
 To you, ye shades, wrapt in eternal mists.
 With quiet joy, in your serene repose,
 The worn-out son of earth may lave his soul.
 What whispers do I hear amidst the boughs ?
 What rustling murmurs through the twilight sound ?
 They come from far, the stranger to behold.
 What are these hosts, that, like a princely house
 For converse gathered, solemnly rejoice ?
 They mingle peacefully, both old and young,
 Of either sex, like gods they seem, and each
 Like unto each, the gliding forms appear :
 Yes, these are they, the fathers of my house.

Thyestes now with Atreus walks as friend,
 Whilst skipping round them, play his murdered boys.
 Is there no enmity amongst you here ?
 Is vengeance, too, extinguished with the sun ?
 Then am I also welcome, and amidst
 Your solemn ranks may hope to take my place.

(*A pause.*)

All hail, my fathers, you Orestes greets,
 The latest scion of your lordly race ;
 What ye have sown, that has he fully reaped.
 Laden with curses, he descends to you ;
 But curses here are easier far to bear.
 Into your circle take him now, oh, take.
 Thee, Atreus, I revere ; Thyestes, too.
 Here all are free from vengeance and from hate.
 Show me my valiant father, whom but once
 In life I saw. Art *thou* my father, he,
 Who trustful leads my mother by his side ?
 Dares Clytemnestra place her hand in thine ?
 Then may Orestes, too, to her draw near,
 And cry, oh, mother, look upon your son !
 Give, oh, my parents, welcome to your child,
 For with our house 'twas ever thus on earth,
 Of murder, was a kiss forerunner sure ;
 The race of ancient Tantalus their joys
 Have aye reserved for shades of blackest night.
 Welcome ye give, and me ye now receive,
 Oh, lead me to the ancients of my house.

Where is its founder? let me him behold,
 And pay my homage to that reverend head,
 Which with th' immortals once at counsel sat.
 Ye seem to shudder, and ye turn away;
 What means it? Does the hero suffer still?
 Alas! the mighty gods, with brazen chains,
 Have fettered fast upon his noble breast
 The dreadful torments, making him their prey.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Orestes—Iphigenia—Pylades.

ORESTES.

What, have ye, too, so soon descended here?
 I greet thee, sister. Still Electra fails.
 Oh, that to us some kindly god would soon,
 With soft-winged arrow, send her quickly down!
 But thee, poor friend, I pity from my heart.
 Now come with me, at once, to Pluto's throne,
 To greet our hosts, as guests but just arrived.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, twin-born, heavenly pair, who from the sky,
 By day and night, shed down on men the light,
 Which on departed spirits may not shine,
 Look down in pity on a mortal pair,
 Like you, united in fraternal bonds.
 Diana, thou thy gracious brother lov'st

Far more than aught which earth or heaven can give,
 And dost with earnest longing ever turn
 Thy virgin face to his eternal light ;
 Let not my only brother, found so late,
 Thus in the darkness of delirium rage ;
 And if thy will, which here has me concealed,
 Be now fulfilled, on me would'st thou, through him,
 On him, through me, thy saving aid bestow,
 Then free him from the fetters of his curse,
 Lest we should lose the precious hours of flight.

PYLADES.

Dost thou not know us, and this sacred grove,
 And this blest light, which shines not on the shades ?
 Dost thou not feel thy friend's, thy sister's arms,
 Which strain thy living form in close embrace ?
 Oh, touch us, see, we are no empty shades ;
 Observant mark my words—collect thyself,
 For every fleeting moment now is dear,
 And our return hangs on a slender thread,
 The thread, methinks, some fav'ring fate doth spin.

ORESTES.

Oh, let me taste, as ne'er I could before,
 With heart at rest, pure joy within thy arms.
 Immortal gods ! who, armed with flaming power,
 Stride forth to rend the heavy lowering clouds,
 And sternly gracious pour the long-sought rain,

With roll of thunder and with roar of winds,
 In rushing torrents on the thirsty earth,
 Yet who the terrors such dread scenes excite
 Soon change to blessings, and men's anxious fears
 Turn into gladness and to songs of praise,
 Whilst in the drops which hang from leaves revived,
 The sun anew is mirrored thousand fold,
 And kind, gay Iris parts, with skilful hand,
 The veil of lingering clouds which hide the sky ;
 Oh, let me now, within my sister's arms,
 And on the bosom of my friend, enjoy,
 All former terrors past, with grateful heart,
 The bliss which you at last on me bestow.
 My heart assures me that the curse dissolves,
 Th' Eumenides retreat, to Tartarus
 I hear them fly, and now the brazen doors
 Clang, as they close behind them, with a sound
 Like roar of distant thunder. I am free ;
 The earth inspiring odours upwards sends,
 And bids me on its plains pursue once more,
 The joys of life, and deeds of noble fame.

PYLADES.

The hours are numbered. Not a moment lose !
 The breeze which swell our sails must be the first
 To waft our bliss to high Olympus' mount.
 Quick counsel, swift resolve are now required.

ACT IV.

SCENE THE FIRST.

IPHIGENIA.

For all of earth's sons,
Weave the heavenly ones,
Perplexities dread,
By them are we led,
From bliss to despair,
From pleasure to care ;
Sad changes that tear
Man's innermost breast,
And rob him of rest.
Then him they provide,
A friend and a guide,
In a city at hand,
Or a far-distant strand,
That in hour of his need,
He may quickly be freed.

Oh ! bless, ye heavenly powers, our Pylades,
And prosper everything he undertakes.
In battle his the valiant arm of youth,
In counsel his the gray beard's searching eye.
His soul serene possesses in its depths,
Exhaustless treasures of a sacred rest,
And to the weary and oppressed he gives

Whate'er they need of counsel or of aid.
 He tore me from my brother, whilst on him
 I gazed and gazed again, as if my bliss
 I scarce could realize, or let him go
 From out my arms ; the whilst I took no heed
 Of all the dangers which were drawing near.
 And now their project to fulfil they go,
 Down to the sea, where, in a little bay,
 The ship lies hid, and there his friends await
 Until the promised signal they behold.
 And me with cautious words they have supplied,
 And taught me what to answer when the king
 Shall hither send, and for the sacrifice
 Shall pressingly demand. Ah, well I see
 That I must let them guide me like a child,
 Yet never have I learnt to keep back aught,
 Or ever aught by cunning to obtain.
 Wo, wo to falsehood ! wo to cursed lies !
 They ne'er relieve the heart like words of truth,
 Or e'er give peace and comfort ; but to him
 Who forges them in secret, anguish bring ;
 For, like an arrow from the bow discharged,
 And by a god diverted from its course,
 They turn and strike the archer. Anxious cares
 In quick succession pass across my breast.
 Perchance once more the Furies, vengeful, seize
 Upon my brother, now that he has passed
 This consecrated grove and sought the coast.

Both are, perchance, recaptured. Hark ! methinks
 I hear the tread of armed men. 'Tis he,
 The royal messenger, who comes with haste.
 My soul is troubled, and my heart beats fast,
 Now that indeed I look upon the man
 Whom I with words of falsehood must accost.

SCENE THE SECOND.

Iphigenia—Arkas.

ARKAS.

Priestess ! with speed prepare the sacrifice !
 Impatiently the king and people wait.

IPHIGENIA.

I had observed my office and thy will,
 Had not an hindrance unforeseen 'tween me
 And the fulfilment of my duty crossed.

ARKAS.

What is it that obstructs the king's command ?

IPHIGENIA.

Blind chance, of whom we ever are the slaves.

ARKAS.

Say on, that I the answer may with speed

Bear to the monarch, who hath now the lives
Of both the prisoners resolved to take.

IPHIGENIA.

On this the gods have not as yet resolved.
The eldest of the twain bows 'neath the guilt
Of shedding kindred blood. The Furies track
His every step ; yes, e'en within the shrine
The frenzy seized him, and he thus profaned
The pure and sacred temple. Now I haste,
Together with my maidens, to the sea,
To purify the goddess in its waves,
And there to celebrate mysterious rites ;
Let none disturb our still and solemn march.

ARKAS.

I to the monarch will at once announce
This fresh impediment. Begin not thou
The sacred rites until he shall permit.

IPHIGENIA.

With this the priestess has alone to do.

ARKAS.

The king should hear an incident so strange.

IPHIGENIA.

His counsel or command could nothing change.

ARKAS.

Oft are the great consulted out of form.

IPHIGENIA.

Insist no more on what I must refuse.

ARKAS.

Refuse not that which is but just and right.

IPHIGENIA.

I yield me, then, if thou wilt not delay.

ARKAS.

Swift will I take the tidings to the camp,
And with the monarch's answer quick return.
Oh, that I could that welcome message bear,
Which all perplexities at once would end,
But thou, alas! my counsel wouldst not heed.

IPHIGENIA.

All that I could that did I gladly do.

ARKAS.

Couldst thou but change, e'en now there would be time.

IPHIGENIA.

Such change as this is not within my power.

ARKAS.

Thou deem'st impossible what costs thee pain.

IPHIGENIA.

To think it possible, thy wish misleads.

ARKAS.

And wilt thou, then, thy all so calmly risk?

IPHIGENIA.

My cause I have committed to the gods.

ARKAS.

The gods by human means are wont to save.

IPHIGENIA.

By their appointment everything arrives.

ARKAS.

I tell thee that it rests within thy hands.
 The monarch's irritated mind alone
 Condemns these strangers to a bitter death.
 To cruel sacrifices long disused,
 The soldiers care not for the cruel rite.
 Aye, many of them whom an adverse fate
 Has cast on foreign coasts, themselves have felt
 How godlike to the exiled wand'rer seems

A kindly face, where all around is strange.
 Oh, turn not from us then, 'twill easy be
 For thee to end the work thou hast begun.
 Since nowhere, Mercy, when she comes from heaven
 To dwell with men, can empire quicker gain,
 Than 'midst a wild and gloomy infant race,
 With life and strength and courage filled, yet left
 To guide itself, and with forebodings sad
 To bear the heavy load of human life.

IPHIGENIA.

Seek not to shake my soul from its resolve,
 Thou canst not mould or bend it to thy will.

ARKAS.

Whilst there is time, I will not trouble spare,
 Or cease repeating one persuasive word.

IPHIGENIA.

Trouble thou giv'st thyself and sorrow me.
 Vain are they both, so leave me, I entreat.

ARKAS.

Sorrows they are which to my aid I call,
 For they are friends, who counsel wise can give.

IPHIGENIA.

Although they stir thy inmost soul with power,
 Yet my repugnance can they not remove.

ARKAS.

And can a gentle soul aversion feel
For one like Thoas, who would nobly act ?

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, when the noble Thoas, not my thanks
But me desires, for benefits bestowed.

ARKAS.

Who no affection feels, can never want
For reasons or excuses. To the king
All that has happened I will now relate.
Oh, that thou would'st revolve within thy soul
How nobly he has borne himself to thee,
Since thy arrival even until now.

SCENE THE THIRD.

IPHIGENIA, (*alone.*)

I feel, alas ! this man's untimely words
Have caused once more revulsion in my breast.
I shudder, and my heart is filled with fear ;
For, as the tide with quick advancing waves,
O'erflows the rocks which strew the sandy shore,
E'en so a flood of bliss o'erwhelmed my soul,
And in my arms th' Impossible I clasped.
It seemed as though a gentle cloud once more

Around me floated, me from earth to raise,
 And rock me in that sleep which Dian laid
 Upon my temples when her kindly arm
 Saved me from death. My long-lost brother seized
 Upon my heart with strong, resistless power ;
 I listened only to his friend's advice,
 Only to save them forwards pressed my soul ;
 And, as the sailor gladly turns his back
 On crags and rocks that bound a desert isle,
 So Tauris lay behind me. But the voice
 Of faithful Arkas wakens me once more,
 Reminding me that they are also men
 Whom I forsake. Deceit and falsehood now
 Are doubly hateful. Oh ! my soul, be still ;
 Beginn'st thou now to vacillate and doubt ?
 Must thou, alas ! thy solitude forsake,
 And leave its solid ground ? Again embarked
 The waves will toss thee on their reeling crests,
 Whilst to thy anxious and perplexing thoughts
 The world and e'en thyself will changed appear.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Iphigenia—Pylades.

PYLADES.

Where is she ? that my speedy words may bring
 To her glad tidings of our near escape.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou seest me here, where, full of care, I wait
The certain comforts thou didst promise me.

PALADES.

Thy brother is restored. The rocky paths
Of the unconsecrated shore we trod,
In cheerful converse, whilst behind us lay
The sacred grove, albeit unmarked by us.
Still, with increasing glory, ever shone
Around his flowing locks the flame of youth,
His deep eyes glowed with courage and with hope,
And his freed heart exulted in the bliss
Of saving thee his rescuer, and his friend.

IPHIGENIA.

Now blest be thou ; and from those gracious lips,
Which tell such joyful news, be never heard
The tones of sorrow or of sad complaint.

PYLADES.

I bring thee more than this, for, like a prince
Nobly escorted, bliss is wont to come :
Our friends and comrades we have also found.
Within a rocky bay the ship lay hid,
And they in sadness waited our approach ;
But when they saw thy brother, shouts of joy

Burst forth from all, and him they then implored,
 The hour of his departure swift to haste :
 Whilst longed each hand to grasp the ready oar,
 And e'en a breeze came whispering from the land,
 A fav'ring zephyr, marked alike of all.
 Then let us haste, me to the temple guide,
 That I the sacred shrine may tread, and seize,
 With reverent hand, the object of our hopes ;
 Diana's sacred image I can bear,
 Unaided, on my tutored shoulders hence.
 Oh, how I long to feel the precious weight !

*(While speaking these words he approaches the temple,
 without perceiving that he is not followed by Iphigenia,
 at length he turns round.)*

Thou stand'st and lingerest. Silent, too, thou art.
 Thou seem'st confused. Does some fresh hindrance rise
 Our bliss t' oppose ? Oh, tell me all, and say
 If to the monarch thou hast yet made known
 The cautious message which to thee we gave.

IPHIGENIA.

I have, dear friend, and yet thou still wilt chide.
 Thy aspect is to me a mute reproach.
 The royal messenger arrived, and all
 Which thou hadst counselled me to speak I said.
 He seemed surprised, and pressingly besought
 That to the monarch he might first make known
 Th' unusual rite, and then his wishes learn ;
 Now his return am I awaiting here.

PYLADES.

Alas! alas! again above our heads
Doth danger hover. In thy priestess' rights
Why didst thou not at once enshroud thyself,
That thou might thus escape the threatened ill?

IPHIGENIA.

I never have employed them as a veil.

PYLADES.

And so thou wilt, pure soul, thyself and us
To ruin bring. Oh, wherefore on this chance
Did I not think before, and teach thee e'en
Request like this, with prudence to evade.

IPHIGENIA.

Chide only me, the guilt is mine alone.
Yet other answer could I not return,
To him who strongly and with reason urged
That which my heart confessed was nought but right.

PYLADES.

The danger thickens, yet let us be firm,
Nor tremble, or with wild and senseless haste
Ourselves betray. Wait thou in calmness here
Until the messenger return again,

And then stand fast, whatever he may say.
 To order sacred rites like these belongs
 To thine, the priestess' office, not the king's.
 Should he require the stranger to behold,
 Who by delirious rage is burdened sore,
 Then make excuse, as if thou kept us both
 Securely guarded, in the sacred fane.
 Thus gain us time, that we with utmost speed
 May seek escape, and with us bear away
 The sacred treasure from this savage race,
 Unworthy its possession to retain.
 Apollo doth auspicious omens send ;
 Ere we our parts have piously performed,
 Already, godlike, he fulfils his word.
 Orestes is restored—is free. And with the freed,
 Oh, waft us also, kind, propitious breeze,
 Hence to the rocky isle where dwells the god.
 Then to Mycenæ, that with life renewed
 It may be filled, and that the household gods
 May from the hearth's extinguished ashes rise,
 With solemn joy, whilst cheerful fires illumine
 Once more their dwellings. There thy gentle hand
 Shall be the first to shed, from censers round,
 The fragrant incense, as an offering sweet.
 Across that threshold thou with thee shalt bring,
 Both life and blessing, and appease the curse,
 Thy kindred then thou shalt again adorn,
 In lordly guise, with freshest flowers of life.

IPHIGENIA.

As flowers that seek the sun, so turns my soul
 To thee, dear friend, and 'neath the cheerful beams
 Shed by thy words, doth comfort seek and find.
 How precious, when we list a present friend,
 Are his persuasive and assuring words !
 Of whose sustaining, godlike power deprived,
 The lonely heart, in saddest stillness sinks ;
 For slowly ripen, locked within the breast,
 The thoughts and purposes that quickly form
 When with the loved one we can hold commune.

PYLADES.

Farewell ! I haste to reassure our friends,
 Who our arrival anxiously await.
 Then will I quick return, and, lurking near,
 Hid 'midst the bushes, there thy signal wait.
 What are thy thoughts ? Why once again doth pass
 A shade of sorrow o'er thy brow serene ?

IPHIGENIA.

Forgive. As fleecy clouds athwart the sun,
 So pass across my soul anxieties
 And trivial cares.

PYLADES.

Oh ! banish fear ;

With it, deceitfully, has danger formed
A close alliance. Both companions are.

IPHIGENIA.

An honourable scruple sure it is
Which makes me shrink from plundering the king,
Who as a second father is to me.

PYLADES.

Him thou dost fly, who would thy brother slay.

IPHIGENIA.

To me, at least, he hath been ever kind.

PYLADES.

What springs from need is not ingratitude.

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis still ingratitude, alas! e'en though
Necessity for its excuse doth plead.

PYLADES.

Thee before gods and men it justifies.

IPHIGENIA.

But still my heart remains unsatisfied.

PYLADES.

Too rigid scruples oft are cloak for pride.

IPHIGENIA.

I cannot argue. I can only feel.

PYLADES.

Conscious of right, thyself thou must esteem.

IPHIGENIA.

The heart must be unstained, if it would know
The blessedness of perfect rest and peace.

PYLADES.

And in the temple thou hast kept it pure.
Life teaches us with others and ourselves
Not so severe to be. This wilt thou learn.
So wondrously is human nature formed,
And its relations are so complicate,
So various and entangled, none may hope
To live apart, or ever keep himself
From others uncontaminate and free.
Nor are we hither sent to judge ourselves,
With careful heed to walk along his path,
Is of man's duties ever highest, first ;
For seldom does he estimate aright,
What he has done, nay, scarcely what he does.

IPHIGENIA.

Almost thou dost persuade me thus to think.

PYLADES.

Needs there persuasion where the choice is none?
To save thyself, thy brother, and thy friend
One only way is left, and need'st thou ask
If we along that only path must go?

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, let me pause, for even thou thyself
Wouldst such injustice ne'er inflict on one
To whom for benefits thou wert in debt.

PYLADES.

If we should perish, bitter self-reproach,
Born of despair, thy portion sure will be.
Thou art not used to suffering and to loss,
If thou, so great an evil to escape,
Not one false word wilt give in sacrifice.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, that I but possessed a manly heart!
Which, when it once conceives a bold design,
Is 'gainst opposing voices firmly closed.

PYLADES.

In vain dost thou refuse. The brazen hand
 Of stern necessity commands. Her will
 Is to the gods themselves a law supreme,
 To which they must submit. In silence rules
 Th' uncounselled sister of eternal fate ;
 What she imposes on thee bear, and do
 What she commands. Thou knowest all the rest.
 Soon shall I here return, from out thy hand
 The precious seal of safety to receive.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

IPHIGENIA, (*alone.*)

I must obey him, for I see my friends
 Beset with pressing dangers. Yet, alas !
 My own uncertain fate doth fill my heart
 With anxious fears, that strengthen every hour.
 Oh, may I not preserve the silent hope,
 So sweetly cherished in my solitude ?
 Shall, then, this curse eternal o'er me rule ?
 And shall our fated race ne'er rise again
 To taste fresh blessings ? Everything decays ;
 The highest bliss, the noblest powers of life,
 Wear out at last, and wherefore not the curse ?
 So hoped I, then, in vain, that guarded here,
 Secluded from the fate which ruled our house,

I should at last, with guileless hands and heart,
 The dark-stained dwelling of my fathers cleanse.
 Scarce is my brother clasped within my arms,
 From raging madness wondrously restored,
 Scarce nears the shore the vessel prayed for long,
 Which back should bear me to my fatherland,
 Than deaf necessity, with iron hand,
 A double crime doth lay on me : to steal
 The sacred statue trusted to my care,
 And him deceive to whom I owe a debt
 Of deepest gratitude for life preserved.
 Oh, that within my inmost heart at last
 Aversion may not germinate, nor hate,
 Like that the ancient Titans felt tow' rds you,
 Olympian gods, my inmost bosom seize
 With vulture claws ! Oh, save me now, and save
 Your sacred image, cherished in my soul.

(A pause.)

Within my ears resounds that ancient song,
 I had forgotten long, and glad forgot.
 The Parcae's song which shudderingly they sang,
 When fell the hero from his golden seat.
 And as they suffered for their valiant friend,
 From raging hearts flowed horribly their song.
 When we were children, often would our nurse
 To me, my brother, and my sister sing,
 Well do I mind it, all that wild lament.

Feared by the mortal race,
 Are all the gods,
 High in their pride of place,
 Ruling with nods !
 Holding in closest bands
 Earth with their hands.

Doubly should fear their love
 Whom they exalt,
 Lift them to seats above
 Heaven's high vault,
 Where thickest mist and cloud
 Jove's golden board enshroud.

Lifts herself Discord,
 See the guests hurled,
 Ruined and god-abhorred,
 Into night hurled ;
 Waiting in vain below
 Judgment that cometh slow.

But the Immortals stay
 Jove's board beside ;
 Then from high mountains they
 O'er mountains stride ;
 Whilst on their march they go,
 Rises from depths below,

Titan dense stifled breath
Up to the skies,
In a white vapoury wreath
Like sacrifice.

Turn the gods from the race
Shunning them lest
They should see slightest trace
On them imprest,
Of the once-favoured sire
Doomed to their vengeance dire.

Thus the Parcæ sang,
Whilst the night-caves rang ;
And the exiled heard,
Every fearful word,
On his children thought with dread,
Bowing down his hoary head.

ACT V.

SCENE THE FIRST.

Thoas—Arkas.

ARKAS.

I own I am perplexed, and cannot tell
 Where my suspicions should in justice fall.
 Whether the captives plot a secret flight,
 Or whether 'tis the priestess gives them aid.
 For rumour says the ship that brought them here,
 Is somewhere still within a bay concealed.
 And then the pris'ner's madness and these rites
 For this delay the pious pretext made,
 Mistrust excite, for forethought loudly call.

THOAS.

Here let Diana's priestess quickly come.
 Then hasten narrowly to search the shore,
 Right from the cape down to the sacred grove ;
 See thou respect its depths, whilst thou dost set
 A well-planned ambush round. Next seize the men
 Where'er you find them. Ye your duty know.

SCENE THE SECOND.

THOAS, (*alone.*)

Within my breast doth anger fiercely strive,

Against her, first, whom once I thought so pure,
 Then 'gainst myself, who did but form her soul
 For treason, by my kind, indulgent love.
 To slavery can man himself innure,
 And learn submission easily, when he
 Of freedom is by others wholly robbed.
 Yes, had she fallen in the savage hands
 Of my forefathers, and their sacred wrath
 Had spared her life, she had so grateful been
 Herself to see preserved, that she her fate
 Had thankfully received, and strangers' blood
 To shed before the altar, she had named
 Duty and not necessity ; but now
 My goodness tempts audacious thoughts to rise.
 In vain I hoped to bind her to myself,
 She wills her fate should keep her far from me.
 Through flattery it was she won my heart ;
 And now that I withstand it, seeks her ends
 To gain by fraud and lies, the whilst she deems
 My kindness but an old prescriptive right.

SCENE THE THIRD.

Iphigenia—Thoas.

IPHIGENIA.

Me hast thou summoned. Wherefore art thou here ?

THOAS.

Say why the sacrifice is thus delayed?

IPHIGENIA.

I have to Arkas clearly all explained.

THOAS.

The reasons I would further hear from thee.

IPHIGENIA.

This respite for reflection Dian gives.

THOAS.

And opportune to thee the respite seems.

IPHIGENIA.

If to resolve so cruel and so dread
 Thy heart is hardened, here thou shouldst not come.
 A king who meditates inhuman deeds
 Can hirelings find enough who will, for gain
 And honours granted, eager seek to bear
 One-half the curse which to the crime belongs,
 And leave the king apparently unstained.
 Concealed from view, in thick and gloomy clouds,
 His thoughts are busy plotting schemes of death,
 And flaming ruin bring his minions down,
 Upon the heads of miserable men,

Whilst o'er the storm he hovers in his height,
Untroubled as a god beyond our reach.

THOAS.

Wild songs are these which flow from sacred lips.

IPHIGENIA.

No priestess now, but Agamemnon's child !
Thou didst revere my words whilst all unknown,
And me as princess wilt thou dare command ?
No, no ! Although I 've learnt obedience from my youth,
First, tow'rds my parents, then towards the gods,
And whilst the most obeying felt my soul
Was then most free ; yet neither then nor since
Have I to man's severe and cruel words,
Or to his mandates rude, compliance learnt.

THOAS.

Not I, but ancient laws obedience claim.

IPHIGENIA.

Upon a law our passions eager seize
Which they, as useful weapon, hope to wield.
To me another speaks, an older law,
Which bids that I withstand thy dread resolve—
The law that strangers sacred must be held.

THOAS.

'Twould seem these men lie very near thy heart,
 Since sympathy with them doth make thee thus
 Strangely forget discretion's primal law,
 Which says, the mighty ne'er should be provoked.

IPHIGENIA.

Speaking or silent, thou mayst ever know
 What is and always will be in my breast.
 Doth not remembrance of a common fate
 To sympathy awake the coldest heart ?
 How much more mine ! In them I see myself.
 Before the altar I have trembled too,
 And solemnly did early death enshroud
 My kneeling form. The knife already glanced
 My living, panting bosom to transfix ;
 My inmost soul in dreadful horror whirled ;
 My swimming eyes grew dim, and — I was saved.
 Are we not bound to render the distressed
 The mercy we have from the gods received ?
 Thou know'st it, knowest me, and yet wilt still
 Constrain me to perform the sacrifice.

THOAS.

Obeys thy office, not the king's command.

IPHIGENIA.

Cease, cease ; no longer try to cloak brute force,

Which in a woman's weakness finds its joy.
 My soul was born as free as soul of man ;
 Stood Agamemnon's son before thee now,
 And what beseemed him not didst thou require,
 His mighty arm and weapon would suffice
 His bosom's rights and freedom to defend :
 I nothing have but words, and it becomes
 A noble mind to heed a woman's word.

THOAS.

I more respect it than a brother's sword.

IPHIGENIA.

For ever changeful is the fate of arms.
 No prudent warrior holds his foe as nought,
 Nor yet does nature fenceless leave the weak
 'Gainst cruel, harsh defiance. Him she shows
 The pleasure of deceit, and gives him arts
 By which he seeming yields, delays, eludes,
 And then at last escapes. Most just it is
 Such arms as these 'gainst violence to use.

THOAS.

Wisely doth prudence stand opposed to fraud.

IPHIGENIA.

A pure and upright soul doth ne'er require
 The aid of cunning or of fraud.

THOAS.

Take heed,
Lest thou incautiously condemn thyself.

IPHIGENIA.

Ah ! couldst thou see how bravely strives my soul
To put to flight, e'en in its first assault,
The evil fate which threatens me from far.
Defenceless stand I, then, before thee here ?
Prayer, lovely prayer, that pleasant olive branch,
More full of power, when held in woman's hand,
Than sword or weapon, thou has thrust from thee,
And now what is there left wherewith my soul
I may defend ? Shall I the goddess pray
To work a miracle in my behalf ?
Lies there no power within my spirit's depths ?

THOAS.

Extravagant methinks the anxious cares
The fate of both these captives in thee wakes ;
Who are they ? Speak ; and tell me whence they come
For whom thy spirit is so strongly moved.

IPHIGENIA.

They are,—they seem,—I take them to be Greeks.

THOAS.

Thy countrymen, indeed ! and they, no doubt,
Renewed in thee the hope of glad return.

IPHIGENIA, (*after a pause.*)

And is it, then, that man to glorious deeds
Alone possesses right ? May none but he
Dare hope to clasp to his heroic breast
Th' ideal to which the noble soul aspires ?
What call we great ? What is it makes the soul
Heave with a shuddering awe beneath a tale,
However oft narrated, but the deeds
Begun by valiant heroes, where success
Not doubtful, but impossible appeared ?
What ! shall the man who steals at dead of night
Through hostile hosts, and, like a raging fire,
That all unseen and unexpected flames,
Destroys his slumbering and his waking foes,
Until pursued at length by men aroused,
And by their horses, back with booty comes,
Be then alone extolled ? Shall none but he
Be honoured and esteemed, who looks with scorn
On paths secure, and boldly fighting roams
Through woods and wilds that he may cleanse the land
From robbers that its hills and vales infest ?
Does nought remain ? Must feeble woman, then,
Forego the nature given her at her birth,

And force 'gainst force employ? like Amazons,
 Usurp from man his sacred right—the sword?
 With blood avenge oppression? In my soul
 The impulse to perform a nobler work
 By turns doth rise and sink. If it succeed,
 Severe reproaches I shall not escape,
 Nor evils worse to bear if it should fail.
 Now on your knees I lay it, oh, ye gods,
 If ye are full of truth, as we believe,
 Then prove it by your timely aid. In me
 Let truth be glorified. Now, hear, O king;
 A secret plot has been already laid,
 And for the captives thou dost ask in vain;
 Escaped from here, they for their comrades seek,
 Who, with the ship, await them on the coast.
 The eldest, he whom madness lately seized,
 But who is now restored, Orestes is,
 My brother, and the other is his friend
 And confidant, whose name is Pylades:
 Apollo sent them here from Delphi's coast,
 With his divine command, to bear away
 The image of Diana, and bring back
 To him his sister. Once the deed performed,
 He promised from the Furies he would free
 The guilty shedder of his mother's blood.
 And now the remnants of our fated race,
 Orestes and myself, to thee I yield.
 Destroy us, if thou canst.

THOAS.

And dost thou think
 The rude and savage Scythian will obey
 The voice of truth and of humanity,
 Which Atreus, the Greek, would not attend ?

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis heard by all, beneath whatever skies
 They may be born, and in whose bosom flows,
 Unchecked and pure, the stream of life. O king,
 What dost thou silent purpose in thy soul ?
 If it be ruin, let me perish first :
 For now all chances of escape are fled,
 I feel the dreadful perils into which,
 With fearful haste, my loved ones I have plunged.
 Alas ! before me I shall see them bound !
 How shall I to my brother bid farewell
 Whom I have murdered ? Never more can I
 Gaze in his dear beloved eyes again.

THOAS.

Thus these deceivers have, with specious art,
 A web like this thrown round about the head
 Of one secluded long, who doth with ease
 And joy believe all that her wishes prompt.

IPHIGENIA.

No, no ! O king. Though I should be deceived,
 These men are faithful, aye, as truth itself.
 Should'st thou discover they are otherwise,
 Then let them fall as victims justly doomed ;
 And banish me, my folly to chastise,
 To dreary coasts of some wild rocky isle.
 But should this be my brother loved, the man
 Prayed for so long, oh, then dismiss us both,—
 Be kind unto my brother as to me.
 My father by his guilty wife was slain,
 She by her son. The last and dearest hopes
 Of Atreus' race on him alone repose.
 Oh ! let me with pure heart and stainless hand
 Go hence, to cleanse our dwelling from the curse.
 Thy promise thou wilt keep ; for thou didst swear
 That if a safe return for me were found,
 Then would'st thou let me go. The time is come.
 A king resembles not the herd, who grant
 That from petition they may respite gain,
 Nor does he promise things he fain would hope
 Performance at his hands will never claim.
 But most his royal dignity he feels
 When bliss he gives to long-expecting hearts.

THOAS.

Unwillingly, as fire with water fights,

And hissing tries to overcome its foe,
 So now within my bosom anger strives
 Against the words with which thou stirr'st my soul.

IPHIGENIA.

Upon me, wreathed with songs of grateful praise,
 Let mercy, like the pure and sacred light
 Of sacrificial flame, descend and shine.

THOAS.

How oft this voice has softened my resolves !

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, give to me thy hand, in sign of peace.

THOAS.

Much thou requirest in so short a time.

IPHIGENIA.

Good to perform doth no reflection need.

THOAS.

It calls for much ; oft evil springs from good.

IPHIGENIA.

Suspicion 'tis which good to evil turns.
 Consider not : act as thy feelings prompt.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

Orestes, (armed)—The preceding.

ORESTES, (*addressing his followers.*)

Strain doubly every nerve, and hold them back
But for a moment longer. Keep your ranks,
And see that ye the passage to the ship,
For me and for my sister, cover.

(*To Iphigenia, without perceiving the king.*)

Come with speed,

We are betrayed, brief space remains for flight.

Haste, haste.

THOAS, (*seizing his sword.*)

None may unpunished bear

His sword unsheathed in my presence.

IPHIGENIA.

Hold!

Profane not Dian's fane with rage and blood.

Command your people to forbear awhile,

And hear the priestess and the sister speak.

ORESTES.

Who is the man that threatens thus?

IPHIGENIA.

In him

Revere the king, who was my second sire.
 Forgive me, brother, that my childlike heart
 Has laid our fate entirely in his hands.
 Your project I confessed, and thus my soul
 From base and wicked treachery I saved.

ORESTES.

Will he permit our peaceable return?

IPHIGENIA.

Thy gleaming sword prohibits my reply.

ORESTES, (*sheathing his sword.*)

Now speak. Thou seest I listen to thy words.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

*The preceding.**Pylades—soon after him, Arkas.**(Both with drawn swords.)*

PYLADES.

Delay no longer, for our friends put forth
 Their final efforts now, and as they yield
 Back to the sea, by slow degrees, are pressed.

What conference of princes find I here?
This is the monarch's sacred honoured head.

ARKAS.

With calmness, as beseemeth thee, O king,
Thou stand'st amidst thy foes. Their rash attempt
Its chastisement has met. Their forces yield.
Their ship is ours. Speak but the word, it flames.

THOAS.

Command my people to forbear. Let none
Upon the foe lay hands while we confer.

ORESTES.

I give consent. Go, faithful Pylades,
Collect the remnant of our people, wait
In stillness till we know what is decreed
By heaven as issue of our enterprise.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

Iphigenia—Thoas—Orestes.

IPHIGENIA.

Relieve my cares ere ye begin to speak.
I fear lest evil discord should arise,
If thou, O king, shouldst not the gentle voice
Of reason list; and if, my brother, thou
Forget to curb the rashness of thy youth.

THOAS.

I, as beseems the elder, know to keep
My anger in due bounds. How dost thou prove
That thou indeed art Agamemnon's son
And brother of this maid?

ORESTES.

Behold the sword
With which he slew the valiant men of Troy,
I took it from his murderer away,
And prayed the gods that they would grant to me
Great Agamemnon's courage, strength, and power,
And then bestow on me a nobler death.
Choose thou from out the noblest of thy hosts
The best of all to battle with me here ;
Where'er this earth doth cherish heroes' sons
This boon no stranger ever finds denied.

THOAS.

A privilege like this our customs here
Have ne'er accorded.

ORESTES.

Then from thee and me,
Oh, let this custom date its happy rise ;
And thou wilt find how all thy people soon,
By imitating us, will consecrate

Their monarch's noble deed, and make it law.
 Not for my freedom only would I strive,
 Let me, a stranger, here for strangers plead :
 If I should fall, my doom is also their's ;
 But should kind fortune be upon my side,
 None will in future ever tread these shores,
 Who, with kind looks of sympathy and love,
 Will not be gladly welcomed. None will then
 Unaided, unconsolated, from here depart.

THOAS.

Not all unworthy dost thou seem, O youth,
 The ancestors of whom thou mak'st thy boast ;
 Great is the number of the valiant men
 Which fill my hosts, and yet will I myself,
 Though old in years, oppose thee as a foe.
 Prepared am I to try appeal to arms.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh ! let it not be thus. This bloody proof
 Is not required, my king. O sheath your swords ;
 Think on my fate, and what I have at stake.
 Rash combat may immortalise a man,
 For, though he fall, he lives again in song.
 But after ages never count the tears,
 The ceaseless tears, forsaken woman sheds,
 Who but survives to mourn, The poet, too,
 In silence passes o'er the thousand days
 In weeping spent, and all the countless nights

Wherein her soul with silent anguish yearns
 O'er her beloved, so quickly called away,
 Until at last her life is all consumed
 With vain attempts to bring him back to earth.
 Ere this my fears had warned me to beware
 Lest I by robbers' wiles should be allured
 From my sure refuge, that to bondage then
 They might betray me. So with anxious care
 These men I questioned, and demanded signs,
 Searched every circumstance, and proofs required,
 Until my heart was sure, nor felt a doubt.
 Behold the token on his hand impressed,
 As of three stars, which on the very day
 That he was born appeared, and which the priest
 Declared were signs that by this very hand
 Some fearful deed should be thereafter done.
 And then this scar, which doth his eyebrow cleave,
 Made me feel doubly sure 'twas he himself;
 For when he was a child, Electra, rash
 And thoughtless, as her nature ever was,
 Dropped him from out her arms and let him fall
 Against a tripod. Oh, 'tis he, indeed.
 The likeness to his father which he bears,
 The joyful beating of my inmost heart,
 These need I show to thee as further proofs?

THOAS.

E'en though thy words had banished every doubt,

And I had tamed the anger in my breast,
 Between us twain weapons must still decide.
 No chance I see for peace. Thou didst thyself
 Confess they hither came from me to steal
 Diana's sacred image, and dost think
 That I upon such deeds will calmly look ?
 The Greek is wont his longing eye to cast
 On treasures which barbarians possess,
 In lovely daughters, steeds, or golden fleece,
 Yet force or cunning have not always led
 Them and their longed-for booty safely home.

ORESTES.

The statue shall not be a cause of strife,
 For now we see the error which the god
 Cast, like a veil, before the eyes of both.
 When he commanded us to journey here,
 His counsel and assistance I implored
 To free me from the Furies' dread pursuit,
 And when to me he of a sister spoke
 Who in the sacred fane at Tauris dwelt,
 Against her will, and promised, that as soon
 As I should bring her back to Greece, the curse
 Should be dissolved, methought Apollo's words
 Applied to great Diana, whilst 'twas *thou*
 To whom the God referred. The bonds are loosed
 Which held thee once in thrall, and to thine own
 Art thou, the holy one, restored again.

'Twas by thy blessed touch that I was healed,
 For in thy arms did madness, with her claws,
 For final conflict seize me, when she shook
 My inmost soul with terror, ere she fled,
 Like some fell serpent gliding swift away,
 Anew the boundless light of day through thee
 I now enjoy, and to my wondering eyes
 The wisdom of the great Diana shows,
 In all its beauty and in all its power.
 For as a sacred image, which is bound
 Unalterably to a city's fate
 By some mysterious oracle, so thee
 The great protectress of our house did take
 And kept thee in this sacred solitude,
 A blessing to thy brother to become,
 And to the fated race of Tantalus.
 When o'er the widespread earth escape for us
 Seems lost and gone, thou giv'st us all again,
 Let then thy soul, O king, to peace incline,
 The consecration of our father's house
 Let her complete. Oh! stay her not, that she
 May to their purified abodes restore
 Their rightful heir, and place upon his brow
 The ancient crown, which all my fathers bore.
 Repay the blessings which her presence brought,
 And let me now enjoy my nearer rights.
 For craft and power, the highest boasts of man,
 Shrink back ashamed before the truth, which shows

In her great soul, the whilst her childlike trust
Placed in a noble man deserves reward.

IPHIGENIA.

Think on thy promise. Let thy heart be moved
By words which flow from honest, truthful lips.
Look on us both. Not oft has thou, O king,
Fit opportunity for such a deed.
Refuse thou canst not. Grant a quick reply.

THOAS.

Then go !

IPHIGENIA.

Alas ! alas ! not so, my king !
Without a blessing, with reluctance thus,
From thee I cannot and I will not part.
Banish us not, for hospitable rights
Between us still exist, nor shall we be
For ever exiled and cut off from thee.
For still to me, as in times past art thou,
As dear and cherished as my father was.
And this remembrance in my inmost soul
Will ever dwell when I am far away.
Should e'en the meanest of thy people bring
Back to my ear the tones I know so well,
Thy country's language, which I learnt from thee ;
And should I ever see the poorest wear

The garb which shows his fatherland is thine
 With joyful welcome will I him receive,
 As though he were a god, myself prepare
 His downy couch, and then beside our hearth
 Invite him to a seat, and nought from him
 But what concerns thy fate and thee inquire.
 Oh ! may the gods, for deeds so noble, grant
 To thee the recompense they well deserve.
 Farewell, farewell. Oh !, turn to us and grant
 One kindly word of parting in return ;
 So shall the breeze more gently swell our sails,
 Whilst tears more soothing flow adown the cheeks
 Of thy departing friend. Farewell. Extend
 To me thy hand, in mem'ry of the past,
 And of our whilom friendship.

THOAS.

Fare ye well.



TRANSLATIONS

FROM THE ITALIAN

AND

ORIGINAL POEMS.

She said
Brokenly, that she knew it; she had failed
In sweet humility; had failed in all;
That all her labour was but as a block
Left in the quarry.

TENNYSON.

IL RISORGIMENTO.

A FREE TRANSLATION, FROM THE ITALIAN OF GIACOMO LEOPARDI.

Methought the sorrows which had grown
To be my joy from me had flown,
And left me desolate and lone,
E'en in my youth's first glow ;
The griefs my heart so sweetly bound,
Which lay within its depths profound,
Whatever in the world is found,
Which bliss it is to know.

In that strange state, when sorrow fled,
And my cold heart seemed as 't were dead,
How many bitter tears I shed,
How was my soul distress :
My spirit in me shrank and froze,
And love departed with its throes,
No longer sobs and sighs arose,
No longer throbbed my breast.

I wept sad tears ; a frightful dearth
 Seemed to o'erspread the arid earth,
 Bound all around with icy girth,

Life seemed extinct and gone.
 The day more lonely was, the night
 More silent, darker to the sight,
 The lovely moon extinguished quite,
 The stars no longer shone.

And yet with weeping still arose
 Those sorrows sweet, those blessed woes,
 Within my breast still feebly rose,
 And feebly fell my heart ;
 And still my fancy, tired and cold,
 To me its thoughts and visions told,
 And still I felt, e'en as of old,
 That I in grief had part.

But soon within me had the last
 Faint traces of that sorrow past :
 Weakness its spells upon me cast,
 I could no longer mourn ;
 Nor sought I comfort, but amazed,
 And silent felt as I were crazed,
 As from its place my heart were razed,
 And from my bosom torn.

Such I became, who once aspired
 To heights of bliss, with ardour fired,

Whom blest illusions once inspired,
 And fed my soul each day ;
 The watchful swallow, flying fleet
 Around the windows, glad to greet
 The early dawn with warble sweet,
 Found to my heart no way.

When pallid autumn's evening fell
 Upon me in my lonely cell,
 And gently tolled the vesper bell,
 The sun's departing hour ;
 In vain for me did Hesper still
 Shine softly o'er the quiet hill,
 The nightingale's melodious trill,
 In vain filled grove and bower.

And you, sweet eyes, whose furtive rays
 Glanced here and there, nor dared to gaze
 Upon the loved, dear eyes that raise
 The lover to the skies ;
 And ye, white hands, which lay in mine,
 And clasped me with their touch divine,
 From my deep torpor, power of thine,
 In vain had bade me rise.

Of sweet emotions widowed quite,
 In mutest sadness as of night,
 My days were passed, and to the sight,
 Serene I seemed to rest ;

Then had I prayed that I might die,
 And hence from wretched being fly,
 But strength for wishing had passed bye
 From my exhausted breast.

In the forlorn and wretched state
 Of age, unknowing love, and hate,
 Was I, alas ! condemned by Fate
 To pass my earliest years ;
 Thus ! oh, my heart, my youth's sweet spring,
 Did little pleasure to thee bring,
 Like April days, which on the wing
 Show us the sky through tears.

What is it wakes me once again,
 Removes this torpor from my brain ?
 How did I this new virtue gain,
 Which I within me feel ?
 Emotions sweet and fancies bright,
 Illusions full of blest delight,
 Is not my heart against you quite,
 Shut fast as with a seal ?

Perchance, poor heart, 'tis but the smile
 With which fond hope would thee beguile ;
 Alas ! of hope, the lovely smile,
 I never more shall see ;
 Nature illusions never grants,
 Or thoughts with which the bosom pants,

The virtue which my spirit wants,
Is what was born with me.

Full well I know this age of wo,
Of genius naught doth see or know,
And to all noble deeds below
Is glory still denied ;
And you, ye eyes, whose trembling rays
From earth to heaven the soul might raise,
Love never sparkles in your gaze,
Wherever it may bide.

No sweet and hid emotion steals
Upon your glance, your heart conceals
No living spark, my spirit feels
Yours is an empty breast.
Nay, e'en the love that brightly burns
In others souls, your mocking turns
To ridicule ; it never earns
Aught from you but a jest.

Yet do I feel in me revive
Illusions sweet, again alive,
Familiar fancies once more strive
Within my wondering sense ;
To thee, my heart alone, is due,
This last faint light, this ardour new,
My comfort all I owe to you,
Whate'er I have comes thence.

Though fortune, beauty, nature, all,
Our fellow men dear blessings call,
Ne'er to my humble lot may fall
 Whilst living on the earth ;
Whilst thou survivest, day by day,
And to thy fate dost ne'er give way,
That He was cruel none shall say,
 Who gave to me my breath.

Westmount, February, 1851.



CANTO NOTTURNO.

 DI UN PASTORE ERRANTE DELL' ASIA.

[Many of these shepherds pass the night seated on a stone, looking at the moon, and improvising melancholy words to airs which are not less plaintive.]

 FROM THE ITALIAN OF LEOPARDI.

What dost thou in the sky, oh ! silent moon,
 What doest thou ? Arising with the eve,
 The deserts thou dost contemplate, and then
 Thou liest down. Art thou not satisfied
 Ere this of wandering on th' eternal track ?
 Would'st thou not shun it ? Still desirest thou
 These valleys to behold ?
 Thy life is like the shepherd's lonely life ;
 He rises with the earliest break of dawn
 To lead his flock to pasture, and beholds
 All day the fields, the fountains, and his sheep ;
 Then tired, betakes him to repose at eve,
 And seeks for nought beyond.

Hear me, oh, moon ! and tell me what is worth
 The shepherd's life to him, and yours to you.
 Oh ! tell me whither my brief wanderings tend,
 And your immortal, never-ending course ?

An old and weak, half-clothed and barefoot man,
 A heavy burden bearing on his back,
 Through vales and over hills, and cutting stones,
 And sinking sands and thorns, through wind and storm,
 And hours of burning heat, and chilling frost,
 Still onward running, panting on his way,
 Breasting the torrents, wading through the lake,
 Now falling, now arising, hasting on
 Without delay or rest,
 All torn and bleeding, till he reach at last
 The goal in which his path
 And all his weary strivings find their end,
 That dark, unfathomable, drear abyss,
 Wherein he casts himself, and all forgets ;
 Such, virgin moon, e'en such as this is life.

To labour man is born ;
 His birth is purchased at the risk of life,
 And pain and grief he proves before all else :
 Receives his parents in his earliest days
 As consolation due to him for birth ;
 And they sustain him as he grows in years,
 And daily study, by their words and acts,

To give him heart ; and, with this mortal state,
 Consoling him, to make him reconciled.
 Than this no kindlier office parents e'er
 Can to their offspring fill :
 But wherefore give to light, and into life
 A being usher, who consoling needs ?
 If life be nothing but unhappiness,
 Oh ! wherefore should it last ?
 Pure moon, e'en such as this our mortal state,
 But thou immortal art, and for my words,
 Perchance, dost little care.

And yet thou lovely, ever wandering moon,
 Thou who so thoughtful art, perchance thou know'st
 What means this earthly life, its woes and sighs ;
 Thou knowest death, perchance, when o'er the face
 Its last pale hues are thrown, when from the earth
 We perish, and from old familiar ways
 And loved companions we for ever cease.
 Thou of a truth dost know and comprehend
 The how and wherefore of all mortal things :
 Thou seest the fruit of morning and of eve,
 Of silence and the ceaseless march of time ;
 Thou knowest too, on whose sweet love it is
 The spring tide smiles :
 To whom the summer heat brings joy, and what
 It is that winter with its frosts doth chase.
 Thou knowest a thousand things, and thousands seest,

Which from the simple shepherd all are hid.
 Oft when I see thee in the desert plain,
 Whose distant circle by the sky is bound,
 And when I guide my flock throughout the day,
 Or when the stars are shining in the sky,
 I ask, "And wherefore all these sparkling lights?
 Who made the infinite air? that deep serene?
 What mean those trackless silent solitudes?
 And what am I?"
 And with myself I reason of the sphere
 So measureless and vast, and of the hosts
 Innumerable of the universe.
 Then how is all employed, and to what end
 Celestial things and everything terrene,
 Revolving ceaselessly, return again
 Back to the point from whither they are sent.
 I cannot guess the use and fruit, if aught,
 But thou, immortal, ever-youthful maid,
 Thou surely seest and know'st the end of all.
 This only do I ever feel and know,
 That of the eternal courses of the stars,
 And of my being frail, whatever good,
 Whate'er content may others have, to me
 Life is an ill.

Oh! ye my flock who rest, oh! blessed ye,
 Who of your misery nothing know, methinks,
 How great the envy that to you I bear!

Not only that from trouble ye are free,
 That every pain and every grief and fear,
 As soon as o'er, ye suddenly forget !
 But more because ye never feel ennui :
 When 'neath the shade or on the grass ye rest,
 Still are you ever peaceful and content ;
 And ne'er annoyance feeling, thus you pass
 The largest portion of the year away.
 And yet whene'er I sit beneath the shade,
 Or on the grass, a sense of weariness
 Enshrouds my soul. It seems as 't were a goad
 Which stings me so, that more than ever far
 I am, whilst resting, from content and peace ;
 And yet I nought desire, and cause for tears
 I never yet have had.

Whatever or how large your joys may be,
 I cannot tell, but fortunate ye are,
 Whilst little I enjoy, my flock, and yet
 'Tis not for that alone I ever grieve.
 If you could answer me, then would I ask,
 Why should it be, that whilst in idleness
 Each animal, reposing at its ease,
 Is satisfied ; yet, when I lay me down
 To seek repose, ennui assails me still ?

Perchance, if I had wings
 To fly above the clouds, and one by one
 To number all the stars ; or could I like

The thunder, wander through the gloomy sky ;
Perchance I should be happier, dear my sheep,
Perchance I should be happier, gentle moon.
But thus beholding others fate, perchance
My thoughts might wander widely from the truth ;
Perchance that, in whatever form or state
We may be born, in cradle or in den,
The day of birth is dire to all who breathe.

JANUARY 23D, 1851.



ENONE.

Beneath the shadows of Mount Ida's woods
Had poor Enone passed the live long night,
So motionless she lay that life seemed gone,
And yet it was not death, but something worse ;
The blank and rigid stillness of despair.
Her pallid lips together firmly pressed,
Scarcely allowed the breath to come and go,
And her sweet eyes were hid beneath their lids,
Whose lashes, rested softly on her cheeks ;
Adown her face, dishevelled fell her hair,
And veiled her fair round neck and snowy arms,
The while her fingers clasped each other fast,
As though to stay the beating of her heart.
Stunned by her grief, the gloomy hours went by,
And she was all unconscious of their flight,
E'en as her soul had drank of Lethe's streams.
But when the chariot of great Helios showed
Above the mountain, and the god looked down
In all his awful beauty on the nymph,
Startled she woke to conscious life again ;
Then in one moment rushed upon her mind,
The harrowing memory of the fearful past,
And in its train the sense of present wo.
With parted lips and outstretched arms she stood,

In silence, gazing from the mountain height,
 On the far-distant shore, where brightly shone
 The glistening waters of the Hellespont ;
 At last, in tones which seemed as though they were
 But echoes of her voice, so sad and low
 The sounds fell on the air, her love and wo
 Burst forth in words of passionate lament.

“ Oh, Paris, my beloved ! my shepherd prince !
 Why hast thou gone from me, thy tender wife ?
 Why hast thou left thy flocks and milk-white bulls,
 The glory of Mount Ida’s verdant slopes ?
 Cursed be the golden fruit which worked such wo,
 Cursed be the hour that saw thee raised as judge,
 Where Zeus alone as umpire should have sat.
 Ah ! what availed me then Apollo’s gift,
 Thou would’st not listen to my warning voice ;
 Incredulous of all, thou laugh’st to scorn,
 Athenæ’s vengeance, and dread Hera’s ire :
 Ill-fated prince, why did’st thou ever list,
 To hateful Aphrodite’s flattering words ?
 Her gifts are curses, treacherous as her smiles.
 I am not fair, indeed, but yet methinks,
 By ever gazing on thy beauteous face,
 I should in time reflect its loveliness :
 And, oh ! remember that the fairest maid,
 Perchance, might prove a cruel, faithless wife,
 Whilst true and loving I have ever been.

Think on the happy days which we have passed
 Together on Mount Ida's breezy heights ;
 When thou no other cares or pleasures knew,
 But pasturing thy herds by running streams,
 Or guarding well thy flocks from savage beasts ;
 And when thy labours ceased, at close of day,
 How sweet the hours that passed in high discourse
 Of the great gods, and then of godlike men.
 That mouth so eloquent, that voice so sweet,
 Upon whose tones enraptured once I hung,
 Oh ! shall I never hear its sound again ?
 Paris ! my husband, wilt thou not return
 To our old haunts, and me, thy loving wife ?
 E'en if thou wilt not list me for the sake
 Of that dear love which once thou felt for me ;
 Yet when at last, after long search, thou find'st
 What thou art gone to seek, oh ! bring her here,
 And I will be to her a willing slave.
 Her couch I'll strew with flowers, lead her each morn
 To bathe her limbs where freshest fountains flow ;
 Then bring her fragrant perfumes for her hair.
 I never will be jealous of thy bliss,
 Whate'er is dear to thee is dear to me,
 And I will learn to love her for thy sake :
 But if my prayers should fail to move thy heart,
 Athenæ ! Aphrodite ! Hera ! bring him here,
 That I may look upon his face once more.
 Once more ;—what do I ask ? oh ! fatal hour,

When we once more shall meet, I see it now.
 In dread, prophetic vision stands revealed
 The direful future, to my shuddering sight :
 Years have past by, and on the plains of Troy
 Paris, my husband and my prince, I see.

“ Lo ! before the gates of Ilion
 Rages fierce the bloody fight,
 And above each Grecian legion
 Gleaming spears shine coldly bright ;
 Twang the bows ! like lightning flashes
 Through the air winged arrows fly ;
 Hark ! how sword on helmet clashes !
 Shouts of triumph rend the sky.

“ Ah, Cassandra ! wretched daughter,
 Of a still more wretched sire,
 Could'st thou not avert this slaughter,
 Save thy race from vengeance dire ?
 No ! to thy prophetic warnings,
 Oft repeated, day by day,
 As from woman's weak forebodings,
 Scornfully they turned away.

“ On her ivory couch reclining,
 See where faithless Helen lies,
 Well I know to her 'tis nothing
 Whether Paris lives or dies.

Hear, oh, hear me, Aphrodite !
 Hasten hither, stay the strife,
 Grant my prayer, for thou art mighty,
 Come, and save thy hero's life.

“ Wherefore is that sudden stillness ?
 Wherefore lags the mortal strife ?
 Strange to see such fearful calmness
 Where the battle was so rife.
 Now the ranks, so closely mingling,
 Fall apart, and leave a space,
 Where each others power defying
 Stand the princes face to face.

“ At the hosts upon him gazing
 Philoctetes glances round,
 And, the dreadful combat waiting,
 Rests his bow upon the ground.
 On his back the fatal quiver,
 Filled with arrows steeped in gall,
 At the bidding of the archer,
 Death they carry where they fall.

•

“ Paris now, with silent scorning,
 Takes his aim, the arrow parts,—
 Ha ! it wants Apollo's guiding,
 Far beyond the mark it darts :

Then his foe, midst bitter smiling,
 Lifts his bow, with whizzing sound
 To the goal the arrow flying
 Strikes the hero to the ground.

“ The Trojan host,
 In wonder lost,
 With blood run cold,
 Their prince behold ;
 Closed are his eyes,
 In dust he lies ;
 The crimson blood,
 Life’s ebbing flood,
 Pours on the ground,
 Beneath, around :
 The arrow’s mark,
 So small and dark,
 Stamped like a brand
 On feet and hand.

- - -
 - - -

“ But, wherefore, Trojans, stand ye motionless,
 Stupidly gazing on the coming foe ?
 Up, valiant soldiers ! quit yourselves like men !
 Rescue the body of your vanquished prince,
 Or Thetis will her cruel vengeance wreak
 Upon the slayer of her godlike son.

Oh ! quickly bear the precious burden hence,
 And lay him on the altar raised to Zeus,
 Who once from Hector's ire preserved his life,
 Perchance he will be gracious to him now.
 Hark ! what is that which whispers in my ear ?
 Methinks I know the voice, albeit so faint
 That from the Elysian shades it seems to rise ;—
 Enone, my Enone, come to me !
 Ah ! well I know there is but one on earth
 Who to my name, the old familiar name,
 Could ever give such thrilling utterance sweet.
 Paris, dear Paris, I will haste to thee,
 Cure all thy wounds, and by thy side forget
 The weary hours that I have passed alone.
 Ye gods ! what do I hear ? wild shrieks of wo,
 With fearful sounds of hurrying to and fro,
 That loud resound within the city walls.
 Alas, alas ! I have arrived too late,
 For Atropos, on swifter wings than I,
 Has passed me in the flight, and she has cut
 The slackening thread of his dear life in twain
 Before I could receive his parting breath.
 Oh, queen of heaven ! have pity on me now,
 And let me weep myself in tears away,
 For I am daughter of a river god,
 And from the ceaseless fountain of my tears
 My anguish and my love, in gushing streams,

Shall flow around the place where he is laid,
To guard it from the tread of feet profane."

But ere dread Hera to Enone's prayer
Had answer given, the vision past away,
And with bewildered gaze the nymph looked round
On Ida's peaceful woods and quiet shades.
Once more unconscious of the coming wo,
Which in prophetic trance she had foretold,
She only knew that she was left alone
To mourn *his* loss who never would return.
Ah! that was sorrow great enough for her,
Without the added weight of future ills,
Which none but the Olympian gods can bear
To keep for ever present to their sight.

SIDMOUNT, MAY, 1849.



THE MOUNTAIN STREAM.

Down from the mountain,
Covered with snow,
See the stream hasten,
Swiftly below.

Ceaselessly gushing
Forth from its source,
Comes the stream rushing
On in its course.

Yet the great mountain,
Covered with snow,
Lies nearer heaven
Than valleys below.

Wherefore so eager
Downwards to roam ?
Rest thee for ever,
Safe in thy home.

But on the mountain
Covered with snow,
Came from the fountain
Words whispered low.

“ In the death stillness
“ Reigning around,
“ Life in its fulness
“ Cannot be found;

“ So from the mountain,
“ Covered with snow,
“ Out from the fountain
“ Gladly I flow.

“ Here should I linger,
“ Motionless still,
“ Then should I never
“ Life's end fulfil.

“ Though on the mountain,
“ Covered with snow,
“ Down on the fountain
“ Sunbeams may glow,

“ Feeble their power
“ To lift me on high,
“ Cold as the glaciers
“ There should I lie,

“ But by descending
“ Joy shall I gain,
“ Blessed and blessing,
“ Valley and plain.

" Whilst the great mountain,
 " Covered with snow,
 " Guarding my fountain,
 " Watches me flow.

" Still ever hastening
 " Quickly below,
 " Mists from me rising,
 " Upwards shall go,

" And on the mountain,
 " Covered with snow,
 " Rain for my fountain
 " I will bestow."

Finished its whisperings,
 Flowed the stream past,
 Clear in its meaning
 Life seemed at last.

Though the great mountain,
 Covered with snow,
 Lies nearer heaven,
 Life is below.

Suffering and doing,
 Blessing and blest,
 Ever untiring,
 Man must not rest.

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

I am tired of city noises,
 Never ceasing all the day,
Loud, discordant sounds and voices,
 Gladly would I flee away.

I am sick of paint and gilding,
 Things which are not what they seem,
With their glare the eyes deceiving,
 Till for true the false we deem.

Nowhere have I felt more lonely,
 Than where being is so rife,
For an atom I am only
 In this world of human life.

Thousands are around me crowding,
 But to me they're strangers all;
And my heart to their's appealing
 Ne'er receives an answering call.

I will tarry here no longer,
 Wasting in regrets each day,
Why should I a moment linger,
 When my heart is far away?

Oh ! how soothing is the feeling
 Which the spirit overflows,
 Rural sounds the senses lulling
 To a sweet and calm repose.

Nought discordant, nothing jarring,
 But a music all divine,
 Forth from stream and river pealing,
 Warbling bird and lowing kine.

Humming bees and leaflets rustling,
 Children's voices from afar,
 Each in harmony combining,
 Nothing the accord to mar.

And the tones so sweetly mellowed,
 All so softened and subdued,
 That it seems like silence rendered
 Palpable in solitude.

Different far the silent stillness,
 Reigning midst the Alpine snows,
 Heart oppressive, like the darkness
 That o'er Egypt once arose.

Nothing there the eye rejoicing,
 Nought but images of death,
 Corpse-like lakes, blue waters lying,
 Still and cold the ice beneath.

But within the genial valley,
Man with nature may commune,
If his heart be meek and lowly,
It to peace she will attune.

There, instead of stranger-faces,
Flowers and birds will round him throng,
Give him songs and kindly glances,
Cheering him the whole day long.

There, instead of paint and gilding,
Sun and cloud, will light and shade
Scenes in beauty far exceeding
Aught that artists' hands have made.

I will tarry here no longer,
Wasting in regrets each day,
Not another moment linger,
But to nature fly away.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1849.



AFTER READING LESSING'S LAOCOON.

Oh! ye old, heroic ages,
How my spirit longs to fly
To the poets and the sages,
Living in the days gone by.

Then amidst the people, Homer
Sat and told his wondrous tale,
Stirred the soul of every hearer,
Whilst each woman's cheek grew pale.

Overpowered by strong emotion,
As the rhapsody uprose,
Heaved their breasts like waves of ocean,
When it grandly ebbs and flows.

And the hosts of eager warriors,
As they heard of deeds of fame,
Done by their heroic fathers,
Yearned to win themselves a name.

Childlike, moved to tears or laughter,
By each vict'ry or defeat;
Flushed with joy, or pale with anger,
Starting sudden to their feet;

And, with warlike ardour burning,
 Vaulting quick upon their steeds ;
 Those were moments for achieving,
 Thus inspired, world-famous deeds.

Fear was none that grief and weeping,
 O'er their dead in battle-field,
 Would unfit such men for fighting,
 Or would make them weakly yield.

In their feelings they were human,
 Gave to nature all her rights,
 Whilst their valour, superhuman,
 Lifted them to nobler heights.

Strange it must have been and awful,
 Thus commingled, to behold,
 Softness joined with strength so fearful,
 In these men of godlike mould.

Painters then with sculptors joining,
 Raised the standard of the race,
 Thoughts sublimest realising,
 Full of beauty, power, and grace.

Ah ! those days indeed were golden
 When 'twas law in every state,
 Artists all should be forbidden,
 Aught unlovely to create.

Poets, sages, all rememb'ring
 How the eye affects the heart,
 That to raise its tone and feeling
 Is the highest aim of art.

Different we, familiarising
 Eyes of ours with meanest things,
 Never e'en in thought aspiring,
 We have shorn us of our wings.

Is there no one who will raise us,
 In these sad, degenerate days ;
 Speak of something better to us,
 Lead us into higher ways ?

Bring us back to look on nature
 Like those men with clearer eyes,
 Who the earth, like one vast altar,
 Saw prepared for sacrifice ;

Who upon each cloud-capped mountain
 Gods beheld enthroned above,
 That each river and each fountain
 Guarded with a jealous love ;

Gods who watched o'er hill and valley,
 Fertile field and verdant plain,
 Gave in season wine and honey,
 Glowing sun and cooling rain.

Then the air, and earth, and ocean
Seemed to men a sacred shrine,
Whilst above, the empyrean
Teemed with life that was divine.

Ah ! methinks those times were purer
Far than ours, more free from guile ;
And to feel their tone were better
Than their outward rites revile.



A VISION.

Methought last night I wandered amidst the shades below,
And gazed upon them as they paced with patient steps
and slow,

Along the smooth and grassy walks, bordered with
shadowy flowers,

Or wrapt in solemn musings sought the green and silent
bowers.

I knew the place, 't was Eden still, but, oh ! how sadly
changed

Since our primeval parents once, along its glades had
ranged ;

No radiant glowing sun was there to shine in glorious
might,

On trees and flowers which once had basked beneath his
golden light ;

Nought but the red and fitful glare which darted from
the sword,

Barring the garden's entrance, now glimmered o'er the
sward ;

Towering above the river's banks the tree of knowledge
stands,

But now to pluck its dazzling fruit are stretched no daring
hands ;

And e'en the awful tree of life, whilst soaring to the skies
 Excites no eager yearning wish, attracts no longing eyes
 In wonder then I asked the shades who stood in silence
 round,

With meek hands crossed, and faces pale, and eyes cast
 on the ground,

“ Say, tempts you not th' immortal tree its living fruit to
 take,

“ Do you no longer value life, e'en for its own dear sake

“ 'T was but the tree of knowledge that your parent
 proved of old,

“ Its taste brought death, whilst this gives life, why the
 your hand withhold ?”

But a shuddering sigh ran through the crowd, and for
 moment's space,

No words to mine made answer, deep silence filled the
 place ;

Till with sad tones a ghostly voice replied in accents low

Ah ! better far for ever rest in stillness here below,

Than tasting the life-giving fruit, return to mortal life,

Once more to bear its sorrows, and its cares and endless
 strife ;

Knowledge it was brought death to us, life would bring
 only pain,

In death is peace, on earth is woe, we would not live again



10

Happy moorland ! on your height,
Now in shade, and now in light,
 Blooms the heather ;
Casting perfumes on the air,
Nothing caring, growing there,
 For the weather.

Blessed moorland ! free from toil,
Never passes o'er your soil,
 Plough or harrow !
Undisturbed, at peace you rest,
By no cares or fears oppress,
 For the morrow.

Trusting to the kindly care
Of the pure and genial air,
All your flowers ;
Whilst for ever comes aright,
Summer day and winter night,
Sun and showers.

On your rocks are purple heath,
Yellow gorse and thyme beneath,
Richly glowing ;

Lifted high into the air,
 Of the world below them there,
 Nothing knowing.

In a nest upon the ground,
 Hath the lark a dwelling found,
 And each flower
 Listens to him as he sings,
 Mounting on aspiring wings,
 Ever higher.

On the moorland, busy bees
 Honey from the heather seize,
 Gently humming,
 Hard at work the live long day,
 Bear at eve their spoils away,
 Downwards coming.

Morning mists from vallies rise,
 But before they reach the skies
 Stay to nourish
 Moorland flowers with gentle dew,
 That in beauty ever new,
 They may flourish.

BUSCOMBE, FEBRUARY 13TH, 1849.

ABSENCE.

Courage, weak heart, yield not thyself to sorrow,
Although the sun awhile withdraw his light ;
A few short hours, and rising on the morrow,
His rays once more will chase the shades of night.

Grieve not that earth has lost its midday brightness,
Hope in the future, raise thy thoughts on high ;
Look, weeping eyes, the night is not all darkness,
See how its myriad stars glow in the sky.

If in the heavens the sun were alway shining,
Could we believe the stars still glowed above ?
For aye upon the loved one's breast reclining,
Could we be sure that absent they would love ?

But now their hearts unto thine own responding,
Reveal far more than thou had'st known was there ;
Their love amidst the darkness cast by parting,
Shines like the stars from out the clear cold air.

Then, comfort take, fond heart, cease tears and sighing,
Their souls will still be full of thoughts of thee,
As is the heaven of stars serenely shining,
E'en when by day not one of them we see.

THE DEATH-BED.

Nay ! shudder not to raise the veil from off that smooth
 calm brow,
 For she was never lovelier than death has made her now
 Of pain and grief he has not left upon her sweet pale face
 One lingering shade, one faintest line, for e'en your love
 to trace.

Her beaming eyes are closed indeed, but they are close
 in sleep
 Far sweeter than the night can give, more placid and more
 deep ;
 And though her lips of love to you will never speak again
 They never more will torture you with accents full of pain

Her heart that beat so wearily is stilled to beat no more
 And though its joys and hopes are fled, its sorrows too
 are o'er ;
 Wish her not back on earth again to live another day,
 Life is a cold and heartless thing, whate'er the happy say

Remember her consoling words, when kneeling near her
 bed
 She gently strove, with trembling hands, to raise your
 grief-bowed head :

“Think not of me, beloved,” she said, “as fading from
thy sight,
Death cannot part us, God will change its darkness into
light.

“Hast thou not likened me to flowers, to birds, to
summer skies?

Hast thou not seen me in the stars, in mists that upward
rise?

Whate’er on earth was beautiful, whate’er was good and
fair,

’Twas but to thee a type of me, my image mirrored there.

“And though I knew it was thy love, and not my own
desert,

Which ever to such use as this did nature’s self convert ;

I grieve not now that in thy heart my memory for aye,

Will be entwined with things which are so much more
fair than I.”

And then she sweetly smiled on you, the whilst in whispers
faint,

She said, when death had come and freed her soul from
all restraint,

Your love to her she would repay, and ever by your side

An angel guardian she would walk, your every footstep
guide.

Then grieve not o'er her early death, since she is with you
still,

Since earth and heaven of her your heart with images will
fill.

And, oh ! it is a noble thing to feel that now your love,
Is fixed not on a mortal maid, but on a saint above !



APATHY.

Apathy ! apathy !
Say is it thee,
Through the dark, stealthily,
Creeping to me ?
Knew'st thou my longing,
Heard'st thou my cry ?
Praying, beseeching,
Feeling might die.

From the world's vanity,
Hollowness, falsity,
Friendship and enmity,
Loathing I yearn ;
Ceaselessly, murmuringly,
Wildly, despairingly,
Recklessly, daringly,
Respite to earn.

Come, my heart's freedom
Quickly restore,
Queen of its kingdom
Rule evermore.

Kill its desirings,
 Wither its trust,
All its aspirings
 Trample in dust.

Harshly, relentlessly,
 Instantly, jealously,
Make thou, oh ! apathy,
 Swiftly depart ;
Pity and sympathy,
 Charity, tenderness,
Faith, with its hopefulness,
 Out of my heart.

Quell the conflicting
 Feelings that strive,
Tortures inflicting,
 My bosom to rive ;
Let no heart-burnings,
 Agony sore,
Painfullest doubtings,
 Torture me more.

Never the wretchedness
 Then shall I know,
Springing from blessedness,
 Followed by wo ;

Blessings and curses,
 Whate'er may befall,
On me shall powerless
 All alike fall.

Coldly and quietly,
 Then shall I brook
Bitter contumely,
 Jealousy's look ;
Words of unkindness,
 Calumny's thorn,
Perfidy, heartlessness,
 Cruelty, scorn.

Then never hurriedly
 Tears shall arise,
Down my cheeks scaldingly,
 Flow from mine eyes ;
And on my lips never
 Love shall find place,
Shadows or smiles ever
 Flit o'er my face.

Then my words falling low,
 Shall, in their tone,
Sound like rain dropping low,
 Down on a stone ;

None by my hand's pressing,
Ever shall tell
My feelings in greeting,
Or bidding farewell.

Then never gloomily
Grief bending low,
Shall her lines wearily
Trace on my brow ;
Armed with frigidity,
Insensibility,
Nothing shall move me,
Inwardly, outwardly.

Pantingly, throbbingly,
Then this poor breast,
Need never, sighingly,
Pray for death rest.
For as thy calmness
Sure is divine,
So the grave's stillness
Equals not thine.

Longing and breathless
Wait I for thee !
Come through the darkness,
Closer to me ;

Hear my entreating,
Thee I beseech !
Fill thou my hearing,
Seeing, and speech.

Wherefore, oh ! apathy,
Dost thou not speak,
Or, by thy touching me,
Give what I seek ?
Ha ! do I feel thee
Curdling my blood,
Of the life in me
Staying the flood ?

Oh ! I would rather
Infinite pain
Bear, than this torpor,
Numbing my brain !
Dead to all feeling,
Stifle my breath,
I shall find healing
Only in death !



SERENITY.

Oh ! that thou would'st come to me,
Quiet, pale, Serenity !
I am weary, sick of life,
Sick of days with trials rife,
Tired of never-ending strife.

Shed upon my soul the balm
Of thy holy, blessed calm ;
Let me, through thy help, attain
Rest from hope and yearnings vain,
Disappointment's gnawing chain.

By thy presence chase Despair,
Eyeing me with dreadful stare,
Hoarsely whisp'ring in my ears,
Drear will be my future years,
Desolate and full of tears.

Calm as Una went her way,
All unhurt, midst beasts of prey,
Let me 'neath thy guidance sweet,
All unruffled, passion meet,
See it crouch before my feet.

Let not fears what others may
Of my actions think or say
Harass me in what I do,
But with thee my way pursue,
Long as I to right am true.

If in time to come, I should
Often be misunderstood,
Let me still and silent stay
For the justifying day,
Be it near or far away.

Let me mount with thee on high,
Till I see beneath me lie
All that now has power to grind,
And in fetters fast to bind,
Soul and spirit, heart and mind ;

Chafing ills, so hard to brook,
Harsh, unmerited rebuke,
All the tyranny and wrong,
I have wrestled with so long,
I, the weak, against the strong.

All the petty cares of earth,
Poor vexations, nothing worth ;
Things which on my spirit jar,
All its hopes and calmness mar,
And to peace the entrance bar.

All the fears, that sad and lone
I must walk on earth alone,
That to me a closed urn
Is the love for which I yearn,
Yet may never hope to earn.

Teach me how to face my wo,
Patiently to see it grow ;
'Neath its burthen still to lie,
Bearing all without a sigh,
Quietly, until I die.

Show me how my longings wild,
I may hush, and like a child,
Taken from its mother's breast,
With its first sad grief opprest,
Weep myself at last to rest.

And if it be wrong to pray
God ! my soul to take away,
Teach me how to bear my fate
All un murmuring, while I wait
Entrance to a better state.



THE WIND.

Summer zephyr, gentle breeze,
Softly whispering 'midst the trees,
When I hear thee, how I sigh,
With thee o'er the earth to fly,
That a glad and merry life
I might lead, away from strife ;
Then each moment of the day
I would spend with thee in play ;
Soon as past the gloomy night,
Ready for our happy flight,

When with fluttering wing from the mountain we'd spring,
And as down its sides we swept,
We 'd shake the leaves of the tallest trees,
'Till the pearly drops they had wept,
For loss of the light throughout the night,
Should fall on the grass below,
And glistening there, should shine as fair
As jewels on queenly brow.

Then we'd drive the mist, before it had kissed
The valleys with sad farewell,
Up to the sky, where it might lie,
And brighter than tongue can tell,

Shine down on the plain o'er which it had lain
 All night like a paly shroud,
 And high in the air be changed there
 To a beautiful, gorgeous cloud.

But over the grass we'd stealthily pass,
 Nor startle with slightest sound,
 The daisies that look from every nook,
 Out on the world around ;
 Whilst buttercups all, and the flowerets tall,
 When they felt us passing them by,
 Should curtsey and bow their heads as low
 As if we were emperors high.

A moment's hush, and on we would rush,
 With wilder joy than before,
 Till stirred should be, like a summer sea,
 The corn as we swept it o'er,
 With a rustling sound, the stalks to the ground
 Should one o'er the other be rolled,
 And the ears in our wake, like waves, should break
 Into ripples of shining gold.

Oh ! then what a race we would have to the place
 Where the cliffs o'er the ocean lean,
 And foolishly think, as they stand on its brink,
 Gazing down on its face serene,

That nought can efface a colour or trace
 Of the forms that are pictured there,
 Not a light or a shade ever pass or fade
 That shows in its mirror fair.

But their trust they would rue, when sidling through
 Some crevice their sides between,
 We 'd toss into heaps, the blue still deeps,
 Till nought should be clearly seen,
 And after our toil, the picture to spoil,
 Oh! how we would triumph to see
 That a viewless thing, like a breeze on the wing,
 Had such power o'er the mighty sea.

And in our exulting, our voices uplifting,
 It should seem as an organ's swell,
 Were booming along to a chorussed song,
 When the sound on the ocean fell;
 Or, as warlike strain on a battle plain
 Were sending its soul-stirring tone,
 From rear to outpost of the serried host,
 That fight for hearth, altar, and throne.

Then like warriors we 'd ride, and far and wide
 The waves, our steeds, should fly,
 And with each lash we gave them should splash
 White foam from their sides to the sky;

Their manes should shake, and their crests should quake,
 And how they should bellow and roar,
 As with thundering crash, at last they should dash,
 In despair on the rock-bound shore.

There we 'd leave them to die, and upwards we 'd fly,
 Tired out of our boisterous play,
 But amidst the leaves of stateliest trees
 We 'd dally awhile on our way,
 And merrily fling, whirled into a ring,
 Lime blossoms, with odours sweet,
 On the ground below to lie like snow,
 For footsteps of fairies meet.

In a swinging dance, the boughs should glance,
 And cast a flickering shade,
 On the mossy seat, where lovers meet,
 Far down in the quiet glade ;
 And with wickedest glee, we 'd peep and see
 The timid young maiden's fears,
 As 'midst her whisperings, our gentle rustlings
 Should strike on her startled ears.

But in pity we 'd cease, and leave her in peace,
 To list to the soothings of love,
 Whilst away we would fly and joyfully hie
 To where the clouds float above ;

And we 'd dart through their ranks, and pierce their flanks,
 And scatter them over the sky,
 Now here and now there, until everywhere,
 Like flocks of sheep they should lie.

And then in our might, how we would delight,
 Against the horizon to pile,
 Cloud alps of snow, which brightly should glow,
 In the sunbeam's radiant smile ;
 But next moment should pass, the vaporous mass,
 And nought in its place should be seen,
 But streaks of white scarce reached by the sight,
 So high in the blue serene.

And we 'd waft them on till the setting sun
 Upon them his beams should fling,
 Until they should seem in the shimmering gleam,
 Like an angel's glistening wing ;
 Then we 'd gather them all for a glorious pall,
 O'er the dying day to spread,
 When at sight of the night, withdrawing his light,
 Her life-giving God had fled.

At last from the skies, with plaintive sighs,
 We would hasten to earth again,
 In ivy-crowned towers to spend the hours,
 Till morning should dawn again ;

And the twilight pale we 'd solemnly hail,
 And awed by her calm repose,
 Not a leaf would we stir of aspen or fir,
 As we stole o'er the woods and the groves.

But ere to our sleep, in the old ruined keep
 We had folded our weary wings,
 We would whistle and scream, until it should seem
 As if troops of unholy things
 Were filling the gloom of each vaulted room
 With dismal, unearthly tones,
 Which away should scare the creatures that dare
 To hide 'midst those mouldering stones.

Like beings uncanny, we 'd whisk through each cranny,
 And creep through the old oaken floors,
 Till the bats, in dismay, should flutter away,
 To hide behind tapestried doors,
 Each iron-bound casement, from roof down to basement,
 On its hinges should rattle and creak,
 And the hangings we 'd flap, against every gap,
 Whilst we played there at hide and seek.

Then we 'd echo each groan and long-drawn moan
 Of the spirits of those who stalk
 At night round the walls of their father's halls,
 And we 'd mimic their ghostly talk,

Till the shades in amaze should stand and should gaze
 Around them, yet nothing should see,
 But hearing each wail borne away by the gale,
 To their graves in terror should flee.

Then when midnight had past, exhausted at last,
 Each other we'd hush to sleep,
 Whilst each twinkling star that shines from afar,
 Its watch over us should keep.
 And over our beds night flowers should shed
 Their rich and o'erpowering perfume,
 Which all day they hide their petals inside,
 To cast on the lonely gloom.

Summer zephyr, well I wis
 Sweeter would be life like this,
 Than such death in life as ours,
 Passing weary days and hours,
 In the cares by which are bound,
 Life and spirit to the ground;
 This is why I sigh to be
 Sailing through the air with thee.



HEXAMETERS.

Lonely are ever the loveliest things on the earth, and
above us
Ever the sorrowful moon in her orbit companionless wanders ;
When in her glory she rises, each planet at once disappearing,
Longingly seeks she a star that with it, her own light
commingling,
Moonbeam and starbeam may know the delight of receiving and giving,
And the still greater bliss from soul union and sympathy
flowing.

Lonely are ever all things the sublimest on earth, and
before us
Lifteth heavenward the mountain his snow-covered head
o'er his fellows,
Dark low'ring thunder clouds hide him from view, and
the forked lightning playing,
Fears to dart upwards, his glaciers in awful serenity leaving,
In his dread solitude finds he no being who with him
communing,
May constrain him to give to his visions a life and a
meaning.

Lonely are ever the holiest things on the earth, and
within us

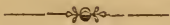
Thoughts in their solitude dwell, for language is weak
and is powerless

All their high meaning to utter, and to clothe them aright
with expression,

Deep in our souls they must slumber, till the day when
to us 'twill be given,

Freed from the rule of the body, upwards to rise where
the spirit

No longer needs words for the thoughts which are earnest
what we shall inherit.



CAMOENS TO HIS LADY'S EYES.

Holiest eyes were ever seen,
Lady dear, are thine I ween,
Heart and soul from earth they raise,
With their clear untroubled gaze,
Showering blessings all the while,
Innocent and free from guile ;
Never hiding what they mean,
Holiest eyes were ever seen.

Grandest eyes were ever seen,
Glorious in their beauty's sheen,
Burning, withering, 'neath their light,
All that is not pure and right ;
Flashing blinding rays around,
Striking falsehood to the ground,
Fearful in their glances keen,
Grandest eyes were ever seen.

Sweetest eyes were ever seen,
Windows whence the soul doth lean,
Beaming with a liquid light,
Like the moon on cloudless night ;

Stillest depths of peace and love,
Sadly tender as a dove,
Gentle, loving, and serene,
Sweetest eyes were ever seen.

Loveliest eyes were ever seen,
Like a summer sunset e'en,
When the clouds across the blue,
Float in ever varying hue,
Changing lights and shades that go,
Ere we see from whence they flow,
Sure they cannot be terrene,
Loveliest eyes were ever seen.

Dearest eyes were ever seen,
Thine to me have always been,
When my earnest longing gaze
Waits till they their eyelids raise,
Then I know I 'm one with thee,
For in them myself I see ;
Are not then thine eyes, my queen,
Dearest eyes were ever seen ?



LINES

WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF A TRAVELLER, LOST
WHILST CROSSING A MOUNTAIN ALONE.

OCTOBER, 1849.

Oh! 'tis as though a century had past
Since on the vale beneath I looked my last,
And yet 'twas but this morning, glad of heart,
I left its shades, nor feared from friends to part.
Friends! coldly falls that word upon my ear,
Where are they now, my voice they cannot hear,
Though all is silent round, the muffled air
To them no words of mine will downwards bear.
Alas! alas! how quickly wanes the day,
No longer can I trace my onward way;
The stream, my only guide, has ceased to flow,
And frozen dead lies buried 'neath the snow.
Uncertain shapes that fill my soul with dread,
Loom through the mist like visions of the dead,
And high in air, sharp crag and icy peak
Look frowning down, as they could vengeance wreak
On man's presumption, daring thus to tread
A realm from whence all living things are fled.
Thick heavy fogs obscure the sky, no star
To guide the wanderer's steps shines from afar,

And 'neath, seen dimly through the dusky air,
 Are sights and forms of horror everywhere :
 Rivers whilst raging struck to sudden rest,
 Their tow'ring waves in rigid heaps comprest,
 Steep alps that shelve to deep ravines below,
 Where noiseless sinks the ever-falling snow,
 And piled in direful ruin, riven rocks
 Asunder torn by fearful earthquake shocks ;
 Dread wastes from whence my dying groans shall rise,
 And break the silence of these gloomy skies.
 Appalling silence, ne'er disturbed by sound
 Of stormy wind or tempest wheeling round.
 Oh ! easier 't were on battle-field to die,
 Than 'midst this stillness, 'neath this leaden sky.
 But yet, perchance, these are but troubled dreams,
 In which the brain with fearful fancies teems,
 For sure this cannot be the gentle earth,
 That loves her children even from their birth ;
 No mother ever thus forsook her child,
 With whom in grief she wept, in joy she smiled ;
 Then why, where'er I look, beneath, above,
 Does Nature give no sign of tender love,
 But deaf and pitiless shuts out my prayer,
 And leaves me to the madness of despair ?
 Oh ! it is terrible, with sighs of pain,
 To gasp for air, then heave it forth again,
 And while each moment fiercer grows the cold,
 To feel its iron-grasp my limbs unfold.

Alas ! I know not if 'tis cold or heat,
 Which makes the ground thus scorch my aching feet,
 The snow in flakes of fire falls on my head,
 And withers up my brain—would I were dead !
 What ! is it thus I must for sin atone,
 Pass through the travail of my soul alone ?
 What ! shall the tortured body rob the soul
 Of all its strength, its sufferings to control ?
 Shame that the mortal part should have such power
 In its last conflict, in its dying hour,
 When will these struggles end and I be free ?
 Would, without dying, I could come to Thee,
 Oh, God ! my God ! What, have I not till now
 Upon Thee called, Strength of the lonely, Thou.
 Dear Father, look on me with pitying eye,
 If Thou art near I shall not fear to die ;
 Though chilling glaciers raise their peaks around,
 And corpse-like lakes my dying form surround,
 Yet even here my heart shall know no fear,
 Since Thou, Lord God of Hosts, art watching near.
 For well I see whate'er Thou dost is right,
 By darkness Thou preparest us for light ;
 And blest, thrice blessed, oh, my God ! are those
 With Christ who suffer ere they taste repose ;
 On Calvaries of suffering thus to sigh
 The soul away, is better than to die,
 Down in the vale, where mists arise between
 Us and that heaven which here is clearly seen,

The dreadful past is fading from my view,
I see and feel that Thou, dear Lord, art true ;
Soon will thy guardian angels waiting by,
Calm all my struggles, catch my latest sigh,
E'en now with softest touch my eyes they close,
And peacefully I sink to my repose.



DREAMS.

Sleep, restless, eager, active brain,
Refresh thy wearied powers,
Sleep till the dawn of morn again
Restore my busy hours.

Or, tell me why it is the mind,
The immaterial part,
When by the senses unconfined,
Should here and thither dart ?

Why is it with the body's rule
That reason's rule should cease,
As though it were the senses' tool
To act as they may please ?

How is it that, although our views
Are then more wide and bright,
Of that fair world the soul endues
With spiritual light ;

Still, whilst distinct the whole appears,
'T is strangely disarranged ;
Though everything Truth's semblance wears,
It seems entirely changed ?

What in the day we view with fear,
 Seems scarcely worth a thought ;
 When in our dreams we see it near
 Our very threshold brought.

Whilst things for which we longed awake,
 We in our sleep despise,
 Far other measure then we take,
 Of all that most we prize.

With loved ones dead, to life restored,
 We talk, nor seek to know,
 If we to them in heaven have soared,
 Or they have come below.

Nought can surprise us, we receive
 As real, what by day
 Our senses never would believe,
 Whate'er the soul might say.

And yet our feelings never change,
 Whatever be the theme,
 However wide may be the range,
 Contained within a dream.

Only our sorrow and our joy,
 Our faith and love and hate,
 Have in their nature less alloy,
 Are deeper and more great.

If then the feelings seem to be
As true by night as day,
So all that in our dreams we see,
May real be as they.

Though when awake we question all
The visions of the night,
Perchance that we in error fall,
And do not judge aright.

And so the wakeful spirit state,
In which our bodies sleep,
When mind is freed from every weight,
The senses on it keep.

May thus we full of power and truth,
Deep, noble, and sublime,
A state where soul renews its youth,
And scorns both space and time.

DAWLISH, OCTOBER, 1850.



TWILIGHT.

With slow and gentle step the twilight comes,
To spread o'er vale and hill, o'er wood and stream,
Her soft yet rich, subdued yet mellow hues ;
Soon with her sad but sweetly tender gaze,
She calmly stills the eager soul of day
To placid thoughts and to serene repose.
Lulled into slumber 'neath her soothing spell,
The little flow'rets cease their graceful dance,
The water-lilies in their cradles sleep,
And e'en the restless summer breeze is hushed.
No longer move the swiftly flying clouds
Across the azure sky, that they may chase
Their shadows flitting o'er the earth beneath,
But quiet float above the mountain heights.
No longer flows the stream with merry noise,
But calmly seeks the shadow of the woods,
Upon its bosom bearing echoes soft
Of warbling birds and gently cooing doves.
The leaves which crown the summit of the trees,
No longer in the glaring daylight lost,
Stand now in strong relief against the sky.
Beloved friend, sweet is the twilight hour,
But sweeter still the twilight of the heart,

When, like the echoes carried by the stream,
Come blessed memories of bygone days ;
Dear, happy days, whose flight we scarcely marked,
Too blest to think of circumstance or place,
Or Time, which gave, then took, our joys away.
Each look and word that in those hours of bliss,
Unconsciously we treasured in our hearts,
There like those leaves in sharp relief appear,
To show more clearly what we knew before,
And though remembrances like these may lack
The glowing beauty of the dazzling day ;
Yet in their twilight all is clearly seen,
And we should grateful be that memory
Thus shows the past, not buried, though in shade.

HOWSHAM WOODS, JULY, 1849.



HER NAME.

No! never shall her name resound
Upon the common air,
For curious echoes listening round,
To babble everywhere.

Only when night her curtain folds,
The slumbering earth around,
When she in deepest silence holds
Each busy daylight sound ;

Then to the music of the spheres
Her name I softly sing,
Until the tones some angel hears,
Who, poised on lightest wing,

Lists to the strain, and then afar
Flies with it through the skies,
That he may seek some lonely star
Concealed from mortal eyes,

Which faint had glimmered quite unseen,
'Midst brighter splendours lost,
Till with her name he crowns it queen
Of all the starry host.

Then tremulous with glad surprise
It flashes into light,
And like a jewel in the skies
Adorns the brow of night.

And if the while a smile should seem
To cross some sleeper's face,
It is that through his happy dream,
Floats that sweet word of grace,

That dearest name, that holiest word,
Too sacred, pure and high,
To be in aught but visions heard,
When none are standing by.

So all day long, like jewel sealed,
And kept with jealous care,
It lies within my heart concealed,
Or only breathed in prayer.



THE POET'S TRIAL.

Nay ! not even at thy bidding, aided by my own desire,
Can I kindle on the altar of my heart the living fire,
Which, from heaven to earth descending, in its nature is
divine,
Coming only when it listeth, not at prayer or will of mine ;
At its flaming, thoughts long hidden, as beneath the
shades of night,
Into glowing life awaken, animated by its light.
And the winged words fly upwards, all exulting in their
might,
Though they only bring faint shadows of heart-feelings
into light ;
Yet I 'm tempted oft to murmur, that ordained it thus
should be,
For when in my soul are rising sweetest thoughts which
none can see ;
If I try to seize them flowing, words their aid will not impart,
And with sighs I feel them dying in the silence of my heart.
Thus it is with waves of ocean, rising highest just before
Into spray their crests are shivered, and they die upon
the shore,
Of their mighty rolling waters, leaving not a single trace,
Save a transient wreath of foam flakes cast upon their
burial place.

THE POET'S CONSOLATION.

When inspiration comes to thee, yet seems
To find no utterance, be not thou dismayed ;
Great thoughts are real, and no fleeting dream,—
They cannot die or fade.

As on a mountain's height some secret well
Is fed by streamlets, quietly and slow,
Till it is filled, and from their hidden cell
The waters overflow ;

So through the quiet night and busy day
Thoughts from above, upon thy heart descend,
Until its brink o'erflowing, on their way
To outward life they wend.

Then vain as 'twere the torrent's eager course
With feeble hands to stem, e'en so the rush
Of thoughts can nothing stay when full of force
From out the soul they gush.

Like hurrying streams that leap o'er rocks which rise
To stay their progress, thoughts o'ercome at last
The hindrances which language ever tries
Upon their path to cast.

Thus, too, like steep, o'erhanging banks, that keep
 The river 'tween their narrow bounds confined,
 Material things serve oft to show how deep
 The waters of the mind.

And sorrow not, although thou keenly feel
 That choicest, noblest words are, after all
 Of inspiration thou would'st fain impart,
 But shadows faint and small.

Words are but signs, and never show the whole
 Of what they picture ; yet, who wisely hears,
 Can with them thoughts create within his soul
 To live through countless years.

So for thy comfort in all future time,
 Remember in such hearts as erst in thine
 Thy thoughts will dwell, and ever there sublime
 In spirit glory shine.



LONGINGS.

Purer yet and purer,
I would be in mind ;
Dearer yet and dearer,
Every duty find.

Hoping still and trusting
Thee without a fear ;
Patiently believing
Thou wilt make all clear.

Calmer yet and calmer,
Trials bear and pain ;
Surer yet and surer,
Peace at last to gain.

Bearing still and doing,
To my lot resigned ;
And to right subduing,
Heart and will and mind.

Brighter yet and brighter,
Virtue still perceive ;
Clearer yet and clearer,
Know Thee and believe.

Christ's command obeying,
Perfect seek to be ;
Earnestly desiring,
Union still with Thee.

Farther yet and farther,
From all evil flee ;
Closer yet and closer,
Ever draw to Thee.

Still in heart ascending
Up to Thee above ;
And Thy truth embracing,
Hold it fast in love.

Higher yet and higher,
Out of clouds and night ;
Nearer yet and nearer,
Rise towards the light.

Light serene and holy,
Where my soul may rest ;
Purified and lowly,
Satisfied and blest.

Quicker yet and quicker,
Ever onward press ;
Firmer yet and firmer,
Step as I progress.

Oft these earnest longings
Swell within my breast ;
Yet their inner meaning
Scarce can be exprest.



THE MORNING HYMN OF TRUTH,
BEAUTY, AND LOVE.

“Dear mother ! list to me,” thus sang a bird,
Returned from distant wandering to its nest,
“Such wondrous things as you have never heard

I’ll tell you, lying ’neath your warm, soft breast.
This morning, waking long before the sun
Had streaked the calm gray sky with lines of light,

Whilst in our peaceful home slept every one,
I preened my wings, made ready for a flight,
And bathed my feathers in the drops of dew

That glistening hang around our mossy nest.
Then with a longing sigh upwards I flew,
Glad that on earth I need no longer rest ;

With prideful joy I rose, and ever rose,
Till, looking down from my aerial height,
I scarce could see the river where it flows,

Like sun-rays glancing sudden on the sight ;
For it was shrouded in the mists that lie
All night upon its verdant banks to hide

The sleeping flowers from night's too curious eye.
 Then morning dawned, and spreading far and wide
 Rolled floods of glorious light, whose golden waves

Swept grandly upwards from the east, and broke
 In ripples on the sky, or sank in caves
 Of deepest purple clouds, and quick awoke

The slumbering day to joyful life again.
 Nearest the sky, in purity and height,
 The snowy summits of each Alpine chain,

All palpitating glowed beneath the light,
 Soon as above them rose their glorious king,
 And touched their altars, set for sacrifice,

With smokeless fire, which, like a living thing,
 Streamed down their sides and flushed the western skies.
 Then forth from icy peak and crag upsprang

A hymn of solemn praise, in tones too high
 To pass the ear of man, and thus they sang,
 The winged words swift rising to the sky :

All the night, with earnest longing,
 We have watched and never slept,
 Waited for the break of morning,
 In our hearts thy promise kept.

Though we could no longer see thee,
 'Twas but for a little while,
 Lord of light, and life, and beauty,
 Thou withdrew from us thy smile.

Stars and planets brightly shining,
 Kept the memory of thy light,
 Freshly in our bosoms shining,
 Through the calm and silent night.

Every peak and mountain hoary,
 Pure for thee has kept its snow,
 Steep them in such floods of glory,
 As from thee alone can flow.

Type of God's own truth eternal,
 We will cheer the heart of man,
 Show him by thy course diurnal,
 Things his reason never can.

Teach him after revelation,
 Of the truth in all its might,
 Good it is that for a season,
 It should take away its light :

That in calmest meditation
 He may spend the midnight hour,
 Strong in faith that when 'tis fitting
 It will shine once more with power.

Meanwhile feeling 't is for trial,
 Of his faith and patience too,
 And to see what he, weak mortal,
 Of himself can think and do.

“Gloria in excelsis” chant we,
 Lord to Thee the whole day long ;
 On the air shall rise towards thee,
 Echoes of our solemn song.

So ceased the hymn, then mother, I had flown
 As high as those grand sounds which upwards passed,
 Swift as the lightning, strong as thunder tone,

And powerful as the rushing of the blast ;
 But well I knew my feeble, fluttering wing
 Would fail me in the flight, and that content

I must remain below, and grateful sing
 Of truth in humbler strains, on mission sent
 As sacred, though more lowly far than theirs,

Who God adore, sublimed from earthly cares.
 So downwards then I flew, but long before
 My pinions brushed the pines, that high in air

Uprear their trunks all clothed with lichens hoar,
 Hanging like lank gray locks of wizard's hair
 From every bough and on each feathery crest,

The air beneath seemed turned to instrument
Of sweetest sounds, that on each other pressed
In varied tones, yet all in concord blent.

Not loud and deep, like that majestic hymn
Which I had heard from snowy mountains rise,
But soft and tender, like the voice of Him

Who spoke as none ere spake in human guise.
And soon I found it was the voice of praise,
From sea and river, valley, hill, and wood,

Which thrilled the air with music, as God's ways
They blest, and echoed his long-spoken word, that good,
Aye, very good, was all which He had made.

And *beauty* was the burden of their hymn,
Such beauty as will never, never fade,
Or cease to satisfy, when life grows dim.

Hail to the dawn of morning,
She comes upon the earth,
Like angel footsteps stealing,
To watch the Saviour's birth.

Like tender mother gently
She wakes us from our sleep,
And for a moment softly
She bids us silence keep ;

Until the sun arising,
Sends down his living rays,
And then with glad rejoicing,
We chant our hymn of praise.

Lord, 't is our happy duty,
On thee all day to gaze,
Reflecting back thy beauty,
Each in our several ways.

When all the waves of ocean,
Unclouded see thee glow,
Thy face in flashing motion
Their thousand mirrors show.

And e'en each dew-drop lowly,
Towards thee may aspire,
For looking on Thee only,
It glows an orb of fire.

Throughout this fair creation,
Nought is too great or mean,
For blest transfiguration
When lighted by thy sheen.

Oh ! that the whole creation,
United thus with thee,
Meet for his imitation,
To man might pattern be.

When beauty sempiternal
 With glory not terrene,
But born of the celestial
 Untroubled and serene,

Is o'er him beaming clearly,
 Transparent, pure, and bright,
Be it his effort truly,
 To show to all its light.

And be it still his duty,
 At every hour to show,
That light of heavenly beauty,
 From out pure hearts should flow.

So passed the melody, and on its wave
I floated in an ecstasy of rest,
My voice to silence hushed, glad and yet grave

The thoughts which slowly swept across my breast,
To see how innocent and free from guile
Sweet nature woke, and with her voice serene

Sang forth her hymns of joyful praise, the while
She glowed with beauty I had often seen,
But never felt till now that 'neath my eyes

She passed, as in a morning dream, when 'tween
 Waking and slumbering an infant lies,
 And smiles at angels that above him lean.

But scarcely had she ceased her matin song,
 And I my wings had flapped for flight again,
 When from below came sounds that swept along

The quiet air and 'midst the mingled strain,
 Which swelled more gloriously and more divine,
 More full of *love* than aught I 'd heard before.

Methought a voice, dear mother, like to thine,
 The chorus led, and gave it wings to soar.
 'T was then once more I stayed my eager wing,

That I might hear each several tone and word,
 As thus it pealed from every living thing,
 That at its waking sang to praise the Lord.

The night is done, and the glorious sun
 Comes flaming up the sky,
 The earth rejoices, with millions of voices,
 We sing in chorus high,
 The love that again, like drops of rain,
 Rejoices the world beneath,
 And with smiling beams and radiant gleams,
 Shines down on the mountain and heath.

Let eagles arise with their fiery eyes,
 Where thou art enthroned above,
 On their pinions bearing towards thee upspringing,
 Our songs of thanksgiving and love ;
 Let lions and bears, from their deep-hidden lairs,
 With thunderous voices call,
 On the whole creation, with glad adoration,
 Before thy face to fall.

Let all that dwell in hill or in dell,
 In cave or in mossy nest,
 Each creeping thing, each bird on the wing,
 Rejoicing after its rest,
 With glad acclaim, thy praise proclaim,
 To the earth and the sea and the sky,
 Till the air shall resound with the joyful sound,
 And waft the glad chorus on high.

'Tis Thou that ripenest the plains to harvest,
 For us preparing food,
 And every hour thy beams with power
 Shine forth on field and on wood ;
 Making loveliest flowers in shadiest bowers
 With richest beauty bloom ;
 Not a single home thou leavest lone,
 In darkness, or cold, or in gloom.

And the sea's dim deeps, where the waves in heaps
 Roll with a lordly swell,
 Whose booming sound is heard around,
 Thou visitest as well ;
 Where the finny tribes in caves abide,
 Thou sendest thy glorious rays,
 And awaking from sleep, through the waters they sweep,
 And though they are mute give praise.

Then happy mead, oh, let us lead
 The heart of man on high,
 And its depths inspire, till with strong desire
 It longs from the earth to fly,
 And upwards mount towards the fount
 Of God's everlasting love,
 Which, like to the sun, on every one
 Shines brightly from above.

'Twas over, and the joyful sounds that gushed,
 Like sparkling waters dancing from their spring,
 High in the Alpine mountains, all were hushed.

But whilst I slowly sank to earth with outstretched wing,
 Soon through the silence voices rose above
 In chorus loud from all the sons of men,

Which fitly closed the Hymn of Truth and Love,
 And sanctified it with a deep Amen.

LIGHT AND TRUTH.

I cannot climb that dizzy height,
For it is hid in shades of night,
Which have concealed it from my sight,
Ere since my youth ;
Oh, wherefore, wherefore, bid me rise,
Your torches ne'er can show where lies
The pathway leading to the skies,
The way of Truth.

With clanging words urge me no more,
Repeating sternly o'er and o'er,
All I have heard so oft before,
 And heard in vain ;
Ah ! think you not full well I know
Man was not meant to rest below,
But onwards, upwards, still should go,
 Till heaven he gain.

Yet must he calmly rest and still,
Throughout the dreary night, until
The sun shall dawn upon the hill,
And show the way ;

Which, ever present to the sight,
 Now soft in shade, now sharp in light,
 Marked with distinctness, clear and bright,
 Ne'er leads astray.

Deem not that with this lower state
 I am content because I wait
 Till God shall change, or soon or late,
 My night to day.
 For when on me his light divine,
 Shall in its cloudless glory shine,
 No feet shall be more swift than mine,
 To tread the way.

Patient to stay, nor seek to rise,
 Till God himself shall show where lies,
 The pathway leading to the skies,
 Is all I ask ;
 In ever praying that the night,
 No more may hide th' untrodden height,
 In darkness from my wistful sight,
 My present task.



A PORTRAIT.

Of aspect angel mild,
And face so sadly sweet,
How to describe my child,
Shall I find language meet?

If Raphael's art were mine,
Then would I seek to trace,
With pencil soft and fine,
Her simple, earnest grace ;

As like a vision bright,
Or infant saint she stands,
In the evening's golden light,
With meekly folded hands.

Her robe, as white as snow,
Covers her little feet,
The sunbeams o'er her throw
A halo ere they fleet.

Upon her smooth calm brow,
No shade of care appears,
The thoughts that dwell there now
Are pure as childhood's years.

To heaven is raised her gaze,
With love that casts out fear,
In stillness deep she prays,
“Oh, God, my daughter hear.”

But now a holy smile
Lights up her dove-like eyes,
As to her side the while
Her guardian angel flies.

And I know not in the gloom,
Where mystery seems to be,
If standing in the room,
Angel or child I see.



INSPIRATION.

Seems it very strange unto you, poets' lips are closed at
times,
That they cannot at your bidding speak their thoughts in
flowing rhymes?
Oh! they are like harps Eolian, which are silence doomed
to keep,
Till some breeze from heaven descending, o'er their chords
may chance to sweep,
When they feel its gentle motion, then they waken from
their sleep,
And obedient to its bidding, sing of joy or plaintive
weep.
For the strains are not their choosing, their own words
they cannot sing,
They but echo only what the zephyr whispers to each
trembling string;
Yet, although the breeze is viewless, we can tell that it is
there,
When with it the harp communing, casts its soul upon the
air.
After strange and fitful pausings all is for a moment
still,
Then, when we the least expect it, rising at the zephyr's
will;

When its mirth is at the loudest, sudden sinking into
sighs,

Oft before the strains are ended flying with them to the
skies.

Thus it is with all true poets, if you ask, they know not
why

They should sing of mirth and gladness, wherefore they
should weep and sigh.

'Tis their part, with humblest watching, inspiration to
await,

But they know not whence it cometh, that belongs not
to their state,

All their duty being only, to give forth what they receive,
Holiest thoughts in holiest verses, which the world may
hear and live.



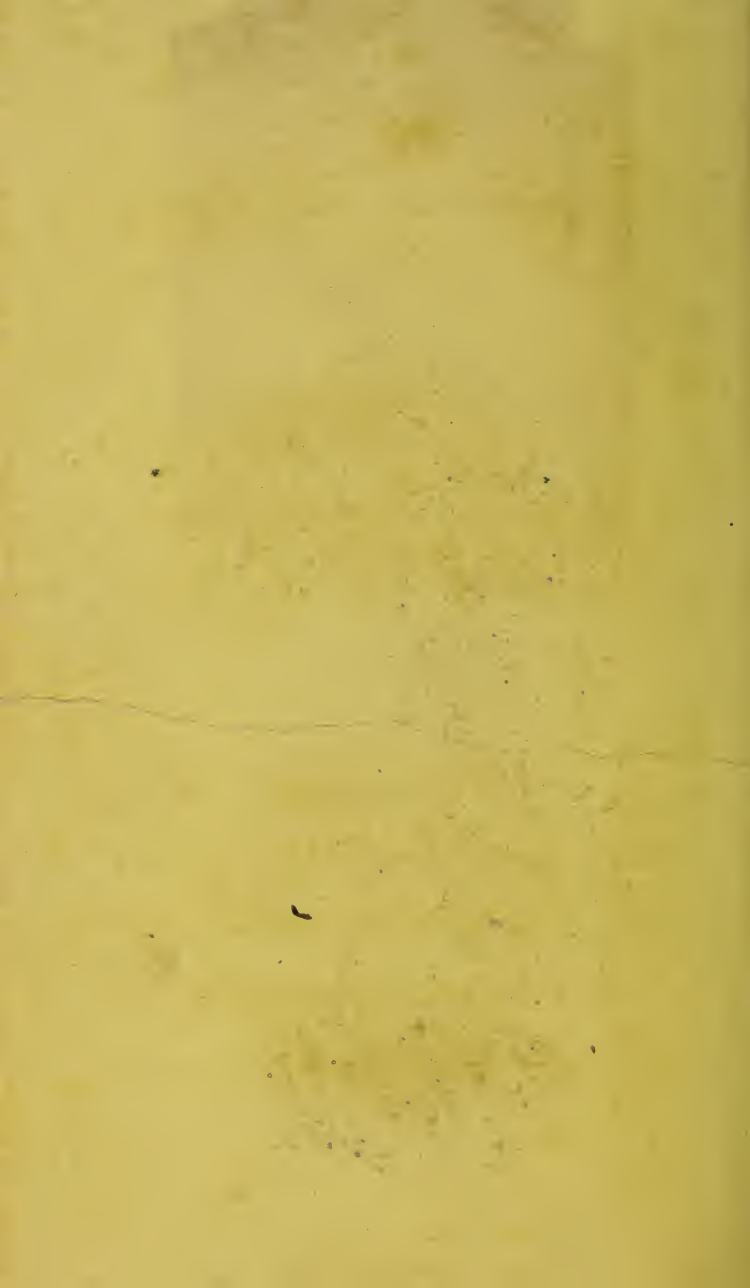
L'ENVOY.

Invention, rest ;
Comparisons go play ; wit use thy will !
Less than the least
Of all God's mercies, is my poesy still.

GEORGE HERBERT.

Baines and Herbert, Printers Liverpool.





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Appeals to Readers.

L. F. B.—Can any of your readers furnish a clue to the authorship of the following book: "Iphigenia in Taurus from the German of Goethe, with Original Poems. Privately printed. 1851. Liverpool: Printed by Baines & Hubert, Times Office." and the preface is dated "Sidmouth, Oct. 17. 1850."

R. B. T. Can any of your

